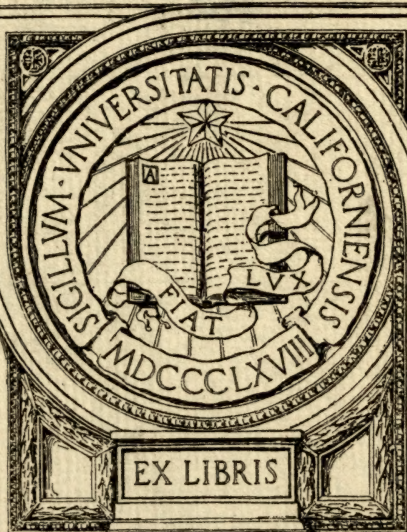
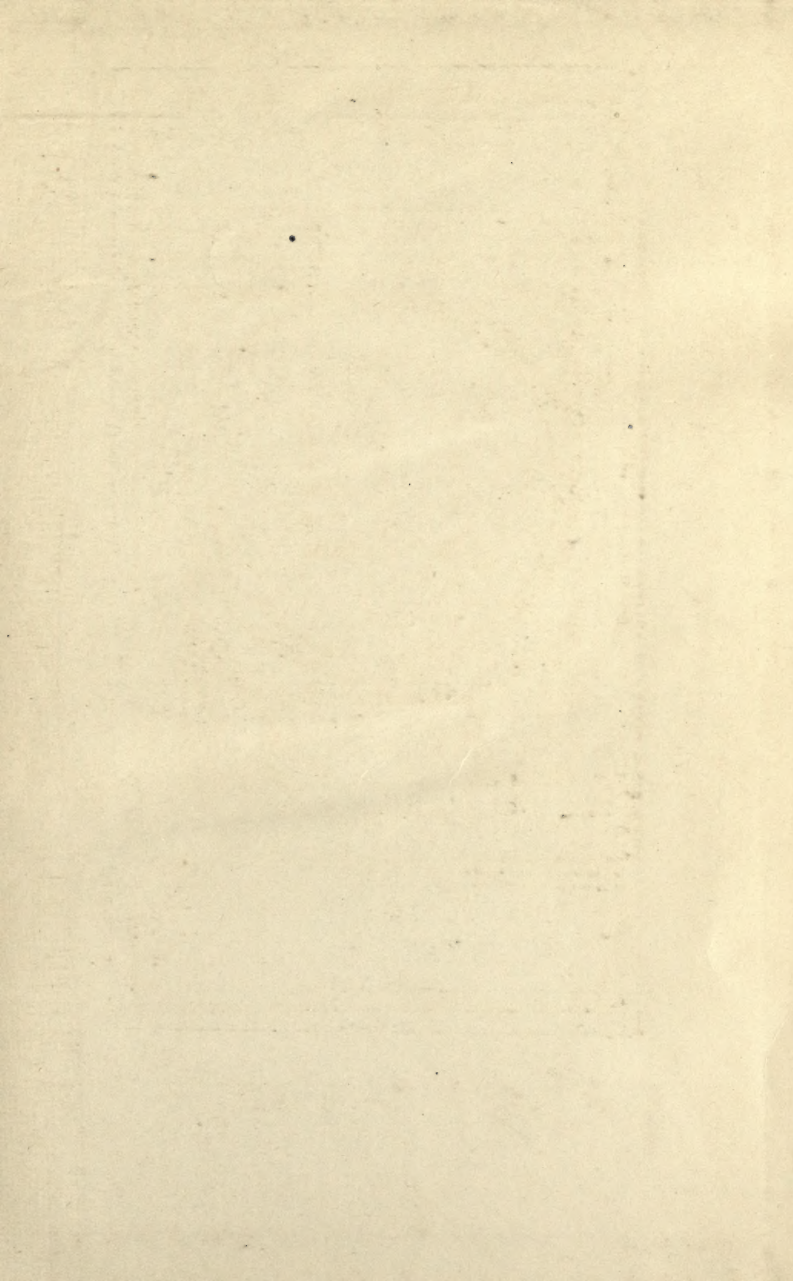


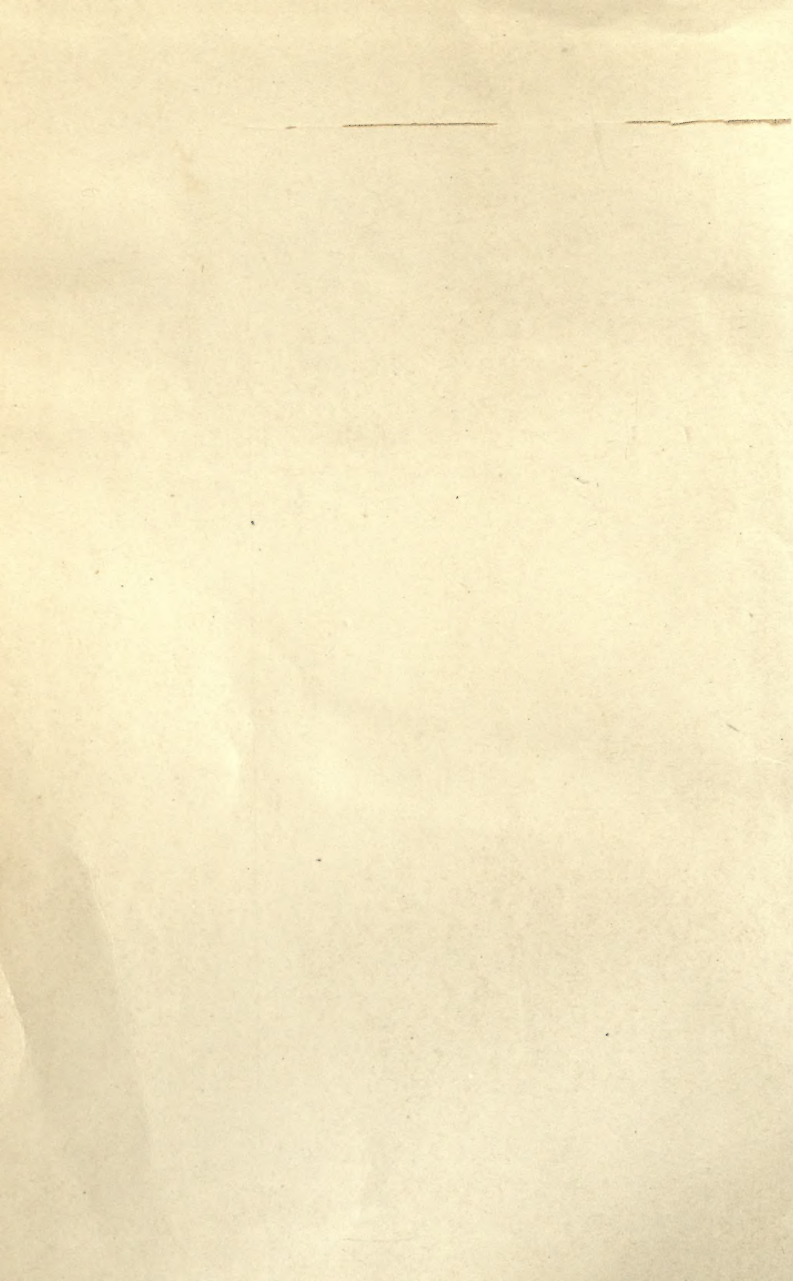
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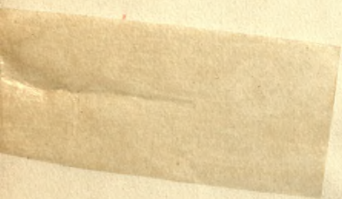
Benjamin Ide Wheeler
with the compliments of
the author -

Francis Churchill Williams

German town, Pa.

J. DEVLIN-
-BOSS

J. BOSS
DELLIN







J. DEVLIN-BOSS

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A ROMANCE of
AMERICAN POLITICS

By FRANCIS
CHURCHILL
WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED
BY
CLIFFORD
CARLTON



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To TOMMY

C O M R A D E
C O U N S E L L O R
C R I T I C 

FOREWORD

JIMMY, taking his beating with clenched teeth and dry eyes ; Jimmy, hurrying to the bedside of some stricken worker ; Jimmy whose face softened at the sound of a woman's voice, and whose arms made a cradle at a baby's touch ; Jimmy whose heart was over-big for his plain, strong body,— this, as well as the Jimmy whose tireless brain wove the political destinies of a city's thousands, is the Jimmy I would have you know.

To the world he was a Boss. To a few he was a Man.

That those who know of a "Jimmy" in his public character may, after reading this story, think sometimes of him as one with longings, disappointments and joys akin to their own is the wish of

THE AUTHOR.



BOOK
• ONE •





J. DEVLIN

BOSS

II

CHAPTER I

JIMMY DEVLIN sat in a chair and was pounded. His arms were folded about his head; his feet were caught in the rungs of the chair; his spindle shanks fortified the shelter given by his arms from the blows which Dan Gallagher sought to plant on his face, and which fell upon his thin shoulder blades and bent back. It was in the Sporting Editor's room, and the time was the breathing spell which followed the printing of the first edition of the "Evening News."

The Sporting Editor and his associates criticized Dan's delivery of blows and awaited developments. Jimmy would have the best of the encounter in the end, they knew from experience.

Presently, a blow heavier than the rest knocked Jimmy sideways, and Dan who was the biggest and strongest of the office boys, paused to note its effect. Jimmy promptly raised his head. He was a small boy, and his face covered with freckles, his pug nose,

thin lips, pointed chin with heavy lines about the mouth, and his wrinkled brow made him look like a chimpanzee. But his blue eyes were sharp, and his forehead was broad. He stuck out his tongue at Dan and laughed, a little, dry cackle that drove his assailant into a fresh fury. Then he ducked into the shelter of his arms just in time to avoid a vicious blow, and, for two minutes, was thumped harder than ever.

When sheer exhaustion made the other stop Jimmy raised his head again. "Hello! slugger," he said, and laughed again. There were ugly, red marks on his neck, and one dirty, chapped knuckle was bleeding; but his voice was unshaken and his eyes sparkled. Dan was satiated with the use of his fists but dissatisfied. He knew that he was worsted; the Sporting Editor's laughter told him so. It was with relief that he heard the City Editor ring his desk bell, and responded to the call.

Jimmy's comment was brief: "Th' big stiff!" he said, as he unhooked his legs from the chair and adroitly filched a half-smoked cigarette from the corner of the Sporting Editor's desk; "he couldn't punch a dent in a pound a butter." Then he sucked his knuckle, and dodged to avoid an eraser which the owner of the cigarette hurled at his head.

Jimmy Devlin was the terror and delight of the "News" office. He was a lamb when he arrived; but, within two weeks he hatched a brood of

talents which bred more laughter and curses among the men of the editorial staff than were earned by the other five boys together. He had graduated from the street, where he sold papers, to the editorial rooms of the "News" where he carried "copy" and ran errands. When at home, he lived in watchful fear of his father who called himself "politician," and found need to be much in the saloons of his neighborhood.

But of these facts the "News" office was ignorant. Jimmy rarely talked there about anything but what concerned the "News" and the men who made it. He was not exactly secretive, but he had a philosophy of his own. He believed in hearing everything that was to be heard, and imparting only such information as was likely to be useful to himself. Thus he developed his ideas upon finance. At fourteen years of age he had discovered the truth that money breeds money and that enterprises are profitable to the promoter in proportion as their workings are hidden from outsiders. So it was that he became a banker.

There were many small tips to be earned about the "News" office. Newspaper making is a hungry business, and some newspaper-makers have small chance to go to restaurants for their meals. Therefore, to the one who brings them a good lunch quickly they are grateful. A nickel measured the gratitude of the men at the desks of the "News"—

until Jimmy arrived. Soon after that time it was observed that the nickel was seldom to be found in the change tills of the nearby restaurants. A dime was the smallest coin that Jimmy brought back, unless the difference between the sum given him and the purchase price of the meal he fetched was less than ten cents. And Jimmy, most often, got the dime. The same conditions existed in the tobacco stores when Jimmy was sent to get a cigar or cigarettes. But, then, no one responded so promptly as did Jimmy to the call for a boy to do an errand; and he always brought back exactly what was wanted. So he got most of the errands to do.

It was while commenting to Jimmy one day upon the dearth of small coin aforesaid that the Sporting Editor mentioned the Dime Savings Fund.

"What's that?" asked Jimmy, as if he didn't really care much what it was.

"That's where they take your dimes, keep 'em, and pay you interest on all you have there," said the Sporting Editor.

"Interest's money," remarked Jimmy with the air of one noting a fact long known to him.

"Yes," replied the Sporting Editor. He did not heed Jimmy's eyes bent intently on him. "They give two per cent on the money you keep in the bank," he added.

"Two per cent?" repeated Jimmy. His tone implied that it was a scandalously low figure.

“Why, two cents on every dollar isn’t bad, when you put in only a dime or so at a time,” said the Sporting Editor.

“That’s so,” reflected Jimmy. Then, as if afraid that this change of opinion might imply lack of prior consideration of the subject: “But they’ve got y’r money!”

“But it’s yours, all the same,” answered the Sporting Editor. “You can draw it out any time you want to.”

“A course,” assented Jimmy. “An’ they ain’t goin’ t’ steal it.”

“No,” said the Sporting Editor; “the money’s safe there. They’re honest and careful.” Then he bethought himself of work to do, and forgot all about the Dime Savings Fund and Jimmy. Jimmy made no effort to continue the conversation. Apparently, his brain was wholly busy with a calculation how soon a particular cockroach would fall off the wall on the Sporting Editor’s head. Presently he walked away, whistling softly.

Several weeks after this some one remarked upon the continual requests made by the office boys for ten cent pieces in exchange for nickels or pennies. One day Dan Gallagher was questioned on this point, and excuses failed him. “Y’ won’t tell anybody?” he said. The other promised. “’T’s cause Jimmy won’t take anything but dimes,” he then confessed.

“Jimmy take dimes?”

"Yes, he says he don't want nuthin' else."

"But what do you give 'em to him for?"

"He gives us a cent fur every ten dimes we lend him fur a year."

"What's Jimmy do with the money?"

"I don't know; he won't tell; an' he said 'f *we* told anybody he'd stop givin' us th' cent. He's got all th' boys in th' office in it an' a lot a fellers outside."

The Sporting Editor—for he was doing the questioning—was puzzled. "How do you know Jimmy 'll give you your money back when you want it?" he asked.

"Jimmy said he would."

The simple assertion took away the Sporting Editor's breath. Here was something novel. To plague Dan he said, "I'll bet Jimmy 'll keep that money; he's lying to you!"

"No, he's not," returned Dan quickly. It was an affirmation of faith against which scepticism was of no avail. But the Sporting Editor was curious, and that afternoon he asked Jimmy point blank what he did with the boys' money.

Jimmy's face fell. "Say! they're a great lot a ducks;" he said contemptuously. "They can't keep their traps shut when they got a good thing."

"But what becomes of the money?"

"It's in th' bank, that's where it is," answered Jimmy boldly. His eyes challenged criticism, but

the Sporting Editor was without compunction. Suddenly recalling his conversation about the Dime Savings Fund, he said, "So you're making money out of them?"

"I'm makin' a cent on every ten dimes," returned Jimmy. "Ain't I worked th' whole game out? But y' can go an' blow th' thing 'f y' want t'. They ain't got th' sense t' run it theirselves. I guess they'll stick by me." He was a true prophet. If the Sporting Editor told what he knew, nothing came of it. Dan beat Jimmy with savage delight and little effect, but he trusted his word absolutely, and so did the other boys. Besides, Jimmy had a persuasive tongue.

It was that nimble member which enlisted coöperation in the making of the "News Junior." The existence of this organ of public opinion, as represented by the six office boys of the "News" editorial rooms, was a complete secret until, elated over a certain racy contribution to its columns, Billy, the newest of the office boys, exhibited a specimen copy to the News Editor. The News Editor, who was bald, but not beyond relish of a joke, was upset by the exhibit.

The "News Junior" consisted of a double sheet of "copy" paper with an allegorical heading in pen-and-ink work showing six boys in line with their thumbs applied to their separate noses, the fingers outspread in the direction of a man with

blonde hair who sat at a desk. A tumbler and a bottle labeled "Whiskey" on the said desk established the identity of the blonde-haired man. It was the assistant City Editor, though the portrait was of indifferent accuracy. Below this heading appeared an article describing a recent unpleasant episode in the "News" office. Pen-pictures of various members of the staff of the "News" ornamented odd corners of the sheets, and the diabolic humor of the artist had assisted a close observation in preserving some things which the subjects of the drawings would have had forgotten. But it was this quatrain which decided the News Editor on his duty:

"Bald head is a stiff
Who smokes old rope
He thinks he is a fine writer
But he needs a dose of dope."

"Who wrote that?" asked the News Editor.

"Jimmy," answered the new boy, frightened.

"Jimmy writes most of the blamed paper?" suggested the News Editor.

"Yes," said the new boy, greatly relieved.

The News Editor knew that he should summon Jimmy and give him a lecture. But he had a wholesome fear of facing him with that quatrain as the subject of their discourse. He decided on a middle course. "Tell Jimmy," he said; "that, if he gets out another copy of the 'News Junior,' I'll report him." He tore up the paper into fine pieces. After

that the "News Junior," which had been meant for private circulation only, suspended publication.

But Jimmy, if he refused all association with the new boy thenceforth, did not allow the incident to disturb him; while the News Editor, for several weeks, bore with Job-like patience the plagues that his conduct merited. If his ink-well was to be filled a big blot was left upon his writing pad—by some one; if he needed "copy" paper the supply of that article was "just out," or, what was brought, was rumpled or dusty; moreover, his shears were constantly disappearing, his mucilage pot regularly upset, his goloshes, umbrella or hat missing, his messages going astray or getting twisted, his copies of the other newspapers being "borrowed," or his tobacco jar knocked over. Nor was he able to fix upon the guilty party; or, discovering him, to prove anything but clumsiness or forgetfulness on the culprit's part. The office boys, without exception, developed a fertility of excuse that was phenomenal, while, strange to say, other members of the editorial staff, at this particular period, were loud in their praises of the unusual activity and intelligence exhibited by the boys. Furthermore, Jimmy himself always was the first to respond to the News Editor's cry of distress or exclamation of anger or disgust. Jimmy consoled with the sufferer and anathematized the offender. Yet the News Editor had not known Jimmy for a year for nothing; and Jimmy's aid and

sympathy made him writhe inwardly, and silently swear an awful vengeance, if he ever got the opportunity.

But, when that opportunity arrived, and the passing of Jimmy from the "News" office came about, the News Editor found only his admiration challenged. Jimmy commanded the situation to the very last.

It was Fate that directed Jimmy's footsteps on that Saturday afternoon as he walked out of an up-town hall where the Reformed Christian Adventists were holding an all-day convention and a reporter from the "News" was writing an account of it; it was Fate that made him take a zig-zag course afoot, instead of boarding a street car for the office, as he had been ordered to do. But Jimmy discounted Fate in that final scene when he took the shaping of his destiny into his own hands.

As Jimmy turned into a cross-town street he saw a boy he knew, and whistled to him. The boy, at that moment, stepped from the curb, was lightly struck by a passing wagon and knocked down. Jimmy was the first one by his side; and, even as he helped him to the curbstone, got the inspiration which changed the current of his life. All day long Jimmy had been trying to devise means to get to the circus. It was the last day of the show in town, and a press ticket of admittance to it was in Jimmy's pocket. But it had been a busy day at the "News" office,

and his request for an afternoon off had been refused. Now Jimmy saw the chance to secure what he wanted.

“ ‘Re y’ much hurt? ” he asked in a whisper.

“ Naw! ” replied the other boy scornfully.

“ Say, I’ll give y’ a nickel t’ make believe y’re me,” Jimmy returned instantly. “ Jus’ give em my name, an’ say y’ got t’ go home,—an’ hand em this,” he added. He slipped the “ News ” reporter’s account of the morning session of the Reformed Christian Adventists’ convention into the other’s pocket.

“ Give us yer nickel,” said the other boy; and got it at once.

Jimmy helped the other boy to sit on the curbstone. A policeman came up. “ Much hurt? ” he asked.

“ Yes, m’ leg ’s all smashed, I guess,” blubbered the other boy. The officer felt of the knee joint. “ Ain’t broke, I don’t think,” he said. “ What’s y’r name? ” he asked.

“ Jimmy Devlin,” said the other boy promptly.

“ Where do y’ live? ”

The other boy gave Jimmy’s address; as a matter of fact, he lived near Jimmy. The officer was about to enter the name and address in his note book, but Jimmy remonstrated. “ Say, y’ don’t want t’ do that,” Jimmy said. “ If his pop heard ’bout him bein’ run over he’d lick him,” he explained, indicating the other boy.

"Well, it was all his own fault, anyway," agreed the policeman. Glad to be rid of further trouble, he put the note book away.

"I'll see him home," volunteered Jimmy. "I live near him."

"Do y' think y' can get home with him?" asked the officer. The other boy said "yes," and tried to get to his feet. But Jimmy's hand, unobserved by the rest, held him down, and Jimmy whispered out of the corner of his mouth, "How 'bout that 'copy?' " And aloud: "What 're y' goin' t' do with that story y' was takin' t' th' 'News' office? Hadn't y' better send that down by a messenger?"

The other boy knew that he was expected to say "yes," and said it. "All right," said Jimmy; "I'll send it off fur y', and' they'll pay th' messenger at th' office. An' somebody ought t' send word y' 're hurt an' can't come down there t'day." Jimmy gave an appealing glance to the circle of faces about him, and not in vain.

"I'll send th' boy's papers and word that he's hurt, too," volunteered a druggist whose place was across the street.

"Much obliged," replied Jimmy. "I'll come t' y'r store, an' tell y' who t' send word t'; I know th' people this boy works fur," he added. "You stay here," he said to the other boy; "I'll be back in a minute."

"That's a smart boy," remarked a bystander, as

Jimmy started across the street. "And a good-hearted one, too," put in another. "Here, here's a quarter for you and your friend," he concluded. The other boy took the quarter. He was not surprised; all sorts of things happened when Jimmy was mixed up in anything.

Across the street Jimmy stood beside the druggist and told him what to say in his note to the "News" office. "Send it t' th' City Editor," he said. "An' tell him, please, that Jimmy Devlin,—he'll know who it is,—was knocked down by a wagon, in front a y'r store, an' hurted so he can't come back t' th' office t'day. But y'd better make it strong, er he won't b'lieve y'; they 're awful hard on their boys,—so Jimmy says."

"Never you fear," returned the druggist; "I'll make 'em believe *me*. Why, I guess I know what happened; didn't I see the boy myself?" He wrote the note, took the bundle of "copy" paper from Jimmy, and said he would send them both off at once. Then Jimmy went back to the other boy.

When they were around the corner, out of sight of the crowd, Jimmy remarked: "How 'bout that quarter?"

"Quarter?" repeated the other boy. He spoke as if he heard the word for the first time.

"Yes, 'quarter'!" mimicked Jimmy. "I heard that softy in th' crowd say, 'here's a quarter fur y'u an' y'r friend.' Come, pull it out, quick!"

“Oh, *that* quarter!” returned the other boy. “I was goin’ t’ give y’ half, but I hadn’t th’ change.”

“Here’s th’ change,” said Jimmy immediately, and he handed the other boy twelve cents. Then he tossed a coin for the odd cent which the other boy won.

A clock struck two. Jimmy dropped the other boy’s arm. “I’m going,” he said. “But don’t y’ furgot that y’ wasn’t hurt an’ neither was I. Here’s that twelve cents t’ help y’ t’ remember not t’ say nuthin’ about it. ’F y’ *do* say anything about it—well, I ain’t furgot who it was broke that winder in th’ Free Breakfast Club buildin’ last week. Th’ perlice is layin’ fur th’ feller that done that.” No, Jimmy had not forgotten; it was one of his principles not to forget—and not to let others think that he had forgotten. Long before, he had discovered that this last rule of action was most effective in the affairs of the world.

Fifteen minutes after Jimmy left the other boy he was deep in a study of the feats in equilibrium performed by a beautiful lady in pink fleshings and a cloud of tulle who floated over a piebald horse. And, so engrossed was he in this and other wonders that took place in the tan-bark circle of the big tent that, for once, that sensitive sixth sense of his slumbered, and he did not see the Assistant City Editor of the “News,” who, with his wife and children, occupied seats two rows back of Jimmy and a hun-

dred feet away. Moreover, it was only when the performance was over that the Assistant City Editor saw him. An umbrella belonging to the man seated next to Jimmy leaned perilously near an opening in the footboard of the seats. Jimmy's foot, unobserved, slyly pushed this umbrella until it slid into the opening and fell to the ground, five feet below. Then Jimmy offered to recover it, and did recover it by dropping between the seats, and so earned ten cents from its grateful owner.

It was when he emerged, red-faced and triumphant, that the Assistant City Editor saw him wave the captured umbrella, and recognized him, and said to his wife: "Why! there's our Jimmy, and everyone's looking at him, as usual."

And Jimmy? Alas! Jimmy neither saw the speaker, nor heard his voice.

It was Monday noon that the news of his doom reached Jimmy's ears. The City Editor of the "News," always alert to advertise his paper, had seen in Jimmy's devotion to his duty a chance to make a telling little story. Wherefore, he had directed Mackey, who was clever at that sort of thing, to write a quarter of a column about Jimmy's mishap and how his first thought had been to get to his paper the report he was carrying. The story was told with realistic touches and a sense of the pathetic that made it very effective; it appeared under a half-display heading on the page devoted to city news.

On Monday afternoon one of the other office boys showed this story to Jimmy as he limped about, receiving with becoming unconcern inquiries concerning his accident. Jimmy read the story, and, then, went to Mackey and thanked him for writing it. "Why, y' might a seen th' whole thing," he declared. "It's jus' e'zacly like it was."

"Is that so?" Mackey replied in an abstracted tone; but, secretly, he was flattered. Jimmy's praise was something, and Jimmy's enmity—well—no one in the office courted that.

It was just after Jimmy had left Mackey that Dan Gallagher, who was much in the City Editor's private office, hurried into the Sporting room where Jimmy was relating his experiences, and told the dreadful news.

Jimmy was to be "fired!" Yes, it was certainly so. Even Jimmy's easy laugh and scornful words did not convince them that Dan was lying. Dan himself had heard the City Editor announce Jimmy's fate. It was after the Assistant City Editor at lunch hour had glanced over the late edition of Saturday's paper and read the account of Jimmy's heroic conduct. Following this he had whistled, and asked the City Editor why he chose Jimmy for that "fake." Then came explanations from both sides,—and the City Editor cut short ensuing argument by the explicit statement, "I'll discharge Jimmy, Friday next! This thing's gone on long enough. Jimmy

may be smart; he's too smart, anyway, for this shop."

Jimmy heard the news without comment. Except for a slight twitching at the corners of his eyes he gave no visible sign that he had not known about all this long before. But, from that moment, he became an object of fresh interest to the other boys. They watched him as they would have watched a strange animal. They were sorry for him, therefore they began to bait him; it was the only way to cover a sympathetic front, which would have been an embarrassment.

"I knowed y'd get 'fired,'" said Dan. "I bet John y' would, a week ago; didn't I, John?" John said "yes," though he hadn't heard of the bet before.

"Then y' got t' pay him—*now*," declared Jimmy, quick as a flash. "How much did y' bet, Dan?"

"Two cents—a—a—nickel," stumbled Dan, taken off his guard.

"Shell out th' nickel, John!" commanded Jimmy, and, when John demurred, he added, "He's got t' pay it, hasn't he, boys?" They were grinning, but they supported Jimmy's decision, and John gave up the nickel which Dan pocketed sheepishly. After that there was no more said of bets having been made on the question of Jimmy's discharge. Indeed, the fun of badgering Jimmy suddenly lost its edge. Admiration of the distinction which had

fallen upon him was increased by the manner in which he bore himself.

But Jimmy withdrew himself from the crowd, and, for ten minutes, managed to secure privacy in the Library, where, with legs swinging from a table, he did some hard thinking.

Then he slid from the table, found pen, ink and paper, and secured a quiet corner. There, for twenty minutes, he was very busy. He wrote with frequent and lengthy pauses, his head cocked on one side, his lips spelling the words he put on paper. Anyone, knowing Jimmy and watching him now, would have predicted startling developments shortly. But no one came upon him, and, when he had finished, he put what he had written into his pocket; and, for the rest of the working day, preserved an inscrutable silence.

Jimmy knew that he would be officially informed of his discharge as soon as the postscript edition of the "News" was on the presses. There was a half hour then in which, for lack of something more pressing to do, the City Editor said the unpleasant things he had to say. Therefore, when he saw the City Editor come out of the composing room, where he had been assisting in "making up the forms" for the postscript edition, Jimmy slid out of the Sporting Editor's room so quietly that no one noticed his going. He lingered a moment in the hallway, then walked into the City Editor's office.

Mr. Carp, the City Editor was at his desk. On one side of him sat a man whose big head, heavy features, keen eyes and shock of black hair were as familiar to Jimmy as to everyone who enjoyed an acquaintance with public characters. Beside him, on a chair, was his inevitable shining silk hat, and in his thick fingers was a half-smoked cigar. He had been talking earnestly to the City Editor, and Jimmy knew that Bill Brady, political leader of the Twelfth Ward and one-time bully, had been registering a "kick" against something that the "News" had said or left unsaid. The News Editor, on the other side of the desk, was secretly enjoying the encounter.

The City Editor was in a bad humor, and, as Jimmy entered, gave him a sour glance, and snapped out, "Get away from here, boy! I didn't ring."

But Jimmy stood his ground. He held out an envelope. "Here's a letter I wanted t' give y'; it's important," he said boldly.

The City Editor snatched away the envelope, and told Jimmy to go, which Jimmy did not do. Instead he crossed his legs and leaned against the door-frame, threw a wink at the News Editor and, then, began a study of the City Editor's face as the latter read the letter.

What Jimmy saw there seemed to gratify him immensely. Impatience, perplexity, amazement chased one another across the City Editor's countenance. He grew almost apoplectic—unfortunately, his sense

of humor was scant. Suddenly, he threw up his head and glared at Jimmy. "What's all this damned nonsense?" he roared.

"It's my resignation from th' 'Evenin' News'—t' take effect t'night," said Jimmy calmly; then he turned and sauntered out of the room.

WHEN Jimmy withdrew himself from the private office of the City Editor of the "News," after presenting his resignation, he left three men in a condition of stupefaction. The City Editor was stricken into silence by the audacity of the thing; the News Editor mutely marveled at the ingenuity which had enabled Jimmy to save himself from discharge; Bill Brady, who dimly comprehended what the boy had done, revelled in admiration. The trick appealed to him, as a politician, by its cleverness and the equanimity with which it had been performed. There was no doubt in the minds of these witnesses to the scene; Jimmy had retired, master of the situation. He was no longer an office boy in the employ of the "News," but he had left behind him documentary evidence that he had voluntarily retired from that position, and that, too, in a formal and dignified manner.

The City Editor, who felt that he had come off badly in the encounter, presently, found voice to say, "That little limb of Satan! His resignation!" At this word he sputtered. "He resigns! does he? Well, I'll be ——!" Expletives failing him, he relapsed into silence.

The News Editor wanted to shout; but understood that his mirth would not be appreciated. Bill Brady, however, had no such fear. "What did he write, anyway?" he asked. The City Editor, not realizing that he was completing Jimmy's triumph, permitted the other to pick up the letter of resignation.

Bill Brady glanced at the single sheet of paper. Then, as he found it helpful to do when arriving at an understanding of what was written or printed, he read it aloud. It was as follows:

"Mr. W. S. CARP, Esq.,

"City Editor of The Evening News:

"Dear Sir: I am thinkin of enturin in anuther purfession soon and I find I must hand in my Resignashun from the staff of the Evening News. We have bin in this news paper bisness fur over a year and four months and I am sorry We must part, fur we have passed many plesant hours in each uthers socierty. But you know bisness work makes us part sometimes with our frens so I will say good by to you with kind wishes that you may succeed and sum day purhaps get a good position

"Yours very truly
"J. DEVLIN."

"P. S. N. B.—Im sorry if my goin away frum you jus now makes it hard to get out the News but I have to leave tonight *sure*. The new boy mite do fur my place. If you do that try the assistunt City

Editor in the new boys place. You dont have to know much in the new boys place.

“Yours

“J. DEVLIN.”

The News Editor, at this point, found that his presence was instantly demanded elsewhere. The City Editor, upon whom a faint appreciation of the humor of the thing was beginning to steal, was cudgelling his brain to find something to say that would save him from ridicule. Bill Brady had taken up his hat and was smoothing the silk. Suddenly, he arose. “Guess I’ll go,” he said. “Try an’ do what I asked y’.” Then, laying down the letter he had read aloud, he asked, “That boy, Jimmy; where’s he t’ be found?”

“God knows!” answered the City Editor for lack of something better to say.

“Well, that boy ’ll get ahead,” remarked Brady sagely, and, with that, he walked out. But, at the end of the hallway, he halted where Jimmy was the center of a ring of boys. “Jimmy Devlin,” he said, “y’ know who I am. Well, you come up t’ my place t’morrow; I want t’ have a talk with y’.”

“All right,” replied Jimmy.

“Gee whiskers!” remarked one of the boys when Brady had gone. “Mebbe y’ll get a job frum him.”

“Maybe,” returned Jimmy. “Pol’tics ’s a good business; an’—pol’ticians boss th’ newspapers,” he added.

Half an hour later Jimmy, leaning against the wall of a big building, a dozen blocks uptown, was smoking a contemplative cigarette when two boys shot around the corner and made for opposite sides of the street. One of them clutched an evening newspaper, and ran to save this and his skin. The other fled for reasons of personal safety only. Twenty feet behind them came a girl of fourteen with legs of extraordinary thinness and length. Under one arm she hugged a bundle of newspapers, the other arm, which stuck far out from the sleeve of her calico dress, worked like the piston rod of an engine and, to such good effect, that she overhauled the boy with the newspaper when fifty feet from where Jimmy stood. In a dozen seconds she had torn away the newspaper from the thief, dealt him a box on the ear that sent him staggering, and whirled about to chase the other boy. But he now was beyond her reach, and she contented herself with hurling at him, "I'll smack y'r face, Splint, if y' ever come on my street again!" Then she rubbed the newspaper on her knee to take out the creases in it, slipped it into the bundle of papers, turned to retrace her steps, and caught sight of Jimmy.

"Hello, Jimmy!" she said. "See me smash that Pete Sims?"

"Yes," said Jimmy; "but I thought y' wasn't goin' t' catch him. I was jus' comin' t' help y'."

“Huh!” remarked the girl. “A lot of help you’d bin! Pete ’d a licked y’!”

“Oh, I don’t know,” returned Jimmy loftily. And, then, “Goin’ home?”

“’Re you?”

“Yes.”

“I ain’t! Good bye!”

“Neither ’m I; I’ll go ’long with y’.”

“Don’t want y’.”

“Yes, y’ do.” To prove that he was right Jimmy wet his finger, carefully extinguished his cigarette, put it into his pocket, and fell in beside her. Kate Mayne had yet to learn that he had resigned from the “News” and had an appointment with a politician for the next day; and, standing where he did with her, it was proper that she should be told these things at once.

Kate Mayne was Jimmy’s “steady.” That is, if the vigorous exceptions filed by Marcus Doran were set aside. The relation was of two years’ standing, and it had begun in the rear basement of the “News” building.

At that time the boys and girls who sold the “News” on the street got their papers daily at the same counters. Ten minutes before each edition began to come hot from the presses, a pushing, noisy mob of boys and girls besieged the distribution counters. Things are better regulated now; but, as it was then, those crowds gave fine chance to spirits

more mischievous than polite. It was a favorite amusement with the boys to pinch the legs of the score or more of girls who fought their way into the pack; and the diversion was the more enjoyed because it was practically impossible to fix upon the offender when all were so jammed together.

One afternoon, while shrieks of pain and the smack of hands from a dozen points in this crowd informed the initiated that many little girls were being made exceedingly unhappy, Jimmy, who had forced himself well to the front, suddenly received a sharp nip on one of his calves, and turned his head so quickly that he caught a smaller boy behind him in the very act of withdrawing his hand. Jimmy had the boy by the neck instantly, and was about to deal out that horrible punishment known as a "Dutch rub," when the offender vehemently protested that he had pinched Jimmy by mistake. In proof of this he called attention to the fact that, shoulder to shoulder with Jimmy, stood a girl. "I meant t' pinch her," the boy hastened to say. "I got y'r legs mixed up. Her legs an' yourn look jus' alike."

Jimmy gave a glance to the girl's legs, and instantly administered the "Dutch rub" with a double dose of knuckling. For, there was no doubt about it, his legs and those of the girl *were* remarkably alike. If anything could be so, the girl's were thinner than his. When he had let the offender go he glared at

the girl. It was a stare of contempt; it was intended to show her that the boy who had just made such a dreadful mistake was as blind as a bat, and that he (Jimmy) was properly scornful of the comparison. But the look failed to wither the girl. She made a telescope of one hand, and pretended to peer at Jimmy's legs.

"I don't b'lieve y' was pinched," she said with a sniff. "They ain't nuthin' underneath y' t' pinch."

Jimmy did not know that it was the spark of youthful love which fired up in his cheeks as he heard this scathing sarcasm; he only knew that he was hot with righteous anger and—impotent. Yes, impotent; for Jimmy's manhood had attained that stage where a blow to a girl was out of the question, and, for a moment, his speech failed him. In that moment he took in the girl with what was meant to be a pitying glance.

Kate Mayne was slightly taller than himself, which was not saying much, and was all legs and arms. Her dress long ago had given up trying to live up to her length of limb, while her shoes, if they held together, would be large enough for her to wear for several years to come. Her hair was in a thick pig-tail down her back, her face was thin, her skin dead white, her nose small and straight. Her mouth drooped at the corners, and this and her eyes, which were large and gray and watchful, were the only things that made an immediate impression

on Jimmy. He thought that her eyes and mouth were scornful, and, to his amazement, completely lost control of his temper. He burst out in a volley of adjectives that made him helpless before her.

She regarded him warily, half expecting an attack with his fists. When he used only words and very blundering ones at that, she grew courageous and witty. "Oh, my!" she said, addressing the crowd. "Jus' hear them words he's usin'! Wonder who learned 'em t' him? Don't nobody pinch his legs again, or he'll blow up."

Thereupon, Jimmy, for one of the few times in his life, retreated. He pretended that he wanted to catch and do injury to the boy who had pinched him, but that was a transparent fraud. And so began his acquaintance with Kate Mayne. How it came about that secret admiration of her defeat of him and a certain liking for her vigorous independence made him attach himself to her and become her "steady" need not be chronicled at length. Certain it is that this happened.

It was for sake of her that he mastered his detestation of "Sneak" Patterson and got him into the "News" dinner and entertainment on Christmas day. "Sneak" was a bootblack. Only boys who bought ten copies of the "News" daily for two weeks previous to Christmas received tickets of admission to the dinner and entertainment. Moreover, these tickets were in great demand; for both

dinner and entertainment were extraordinary affairs. But Kate was sorry for "Sneak" because he had a club foot and was bow-legged. She came to Jimmy three weeks before Christmas. "Sneak wants t' go t' th' dinner," she said. "You get him in." Then she ran to sell a paper to a man who had whistled to her, and did not mention the subject to Jimmy again.

But Jimmy knew that Kate had told "Sneak" that he should go to the dinner—such was her superb confidence in Jimmy. And, as he had not refused to do what she asked, he intended to do it. That he could fail never entered his head. It was simply a question of ways and means. That was the habit of Jimmy. It was always: How shall I do it? never, Can I?

So it was that "Sneak" got word, a few days later, to line up at the distribution counters of the "News," and buy ten copies of the postscript edition of that paper. Jimmy put the seven cents necessary thereto into "Sneak's" hand just as he made the purchase. Even "Sneak's" club foot and bow-legs were not a guarantee of his honesty. Jimmy followed him closely to the street.

"Give us those 'Newses'," he demanded. "An' come back t'morrow an' do th' same thing. I'll give y' th' money." Then Jimmy went off, and "hustled" to get rid of his extra load.

The following day "Sneak" again was on hand, and the performance was repeated; and so each day

until Christmas. After a few days one "Snapper" Smith recognized "Sneak" just as he was buying his papers, and told the distributing agent: "Say, this feller aint no news-boy! He's jus' buyin' 'Newses' t' get int' th' dinner." Later, when "Snapper" had seen the transfer of "Sneak's" papers to Jimmy, he proclaimed at the distributing counter how the trick was done.

But the man at the counter only laughed at Jimmy; and Jimmy himself, at the Christmas dinner, took pains to make "Snapper" remember the incident. "Snapper" had put a quarter of a pumpkin pie under his cap, having eaten all he could at one time. Jimmy saw him conceal the pie, and waited until "Snapper" was directly opposite Mr. Mechlin, the circulation manager. Then, with a terrific swing, he brought down the flat of his hand plump on "Snapper's" cap, and "Snapper" stood a knave revealed, while pumpkin pie shampoo guttered down his face.

Kate Mayne, who had seen the occurrence, widely circulated a circumstantial account of it. She also said, "Did y' see 'Sneak' Patterson at th' dinner? He was there; Jimmy got him in."

Jimmy heard this and was satisfied that he had done well. Marcus Doran scoffed at Jimmy's trick. "Why, that ain't nuthin," he said. "Anyone could a done that. Th' 'News' people's easy fruit!" But, then, Marcus was prejudiced. Praise of Jimmy

stung him; praise of Jimmy by Kate rankled in his breast a long time.

Marcus Doran was sixteen. He had been a news-boy once, but, from the moment he got a place in the office of a cement company, he held the honorable trade of newspaper vending as unworthy. He lived near Kate Mayne, and cherished an admiration of her which he did not hesitate to let her see. Thus Jimmy and he were rivals, though Jimmy never acknowledged it. Marcus had thrashed Jimmy repeatedly; it was his confession of Jimmy's equality and, again, a reminder that, when the lion roared, all other beasts, and Jimmy in particular, must keep silence. But, though Marcus was big and strong and promised to have good looks, all of which Jimmy was not, Jimmy was the Ulysses. Marcus's supply of bad words and a certain knavish cleverness were poor weapons against Jimmy. Furthermore, Marcus was vain.

It did not take Jimmy long to discover this, and he made frequent use of it. One evening in July Marcus had stolen a march on Jimmy, and was sitting with Kate on a deserted wharf, on the river front, where cool breezes came up from the bay, and they were alone. It was a place and hour for the opening of hearts, and Marcus had begun to tell Kate certain things of import when a familiar voice behind them remarked, "He's a lyin'!"

"Who's a lyin'?" demanded Marcus aggressively.

"Some feller I jus' seen a fishin' over there," answered Jimmy coolly, and sat down on the other side of Kate.

"You get out a here!" ordered Marcus.

"What fur?" replied Jimmy.

"'Cause we don't want y'; do we, Kate?" returned Marcus. It was a dangerous appeal. Jimmy understood feminine fickleness well enough for that, and he hastened to say, "Oh! y' got a cinch on her, have y'?" and started to his feet.

"No, he ain't, neither," put in Kate quickly. Jimmy waited.

Marcus was disgruntled. "I come down here with y'," he complained.

"Well," said Jimmy; "I got somethin' else t' do, anyway. I'm goin' t' swim acrost th' river."

"Y'll get drowned," mocked Kate.

"Huh! 'taint nuthin' t' swim acrost!" said Marcus.

"Big talk!" remarked Jimmy.

"Bet I can do it!" returned Marcus.

"I'll beat y' acrost,"

Marcus was loth to lose his place beside Kate.

"Don't want t'—now," he said.

"Y're afraid! I dasied y'!" taunted Jimmy.

That settled it. "I'll beat y' there an' back," replied Marcus at once. To be "dasied" before Kate was not to be borne. "You stay here an' watch," he said to Kate.

Jimmy followed him over the edge of the wharf. On a swinging platform there they took off their clothes, and slipped into the river. They struck out for mid-stream. It was a moonlight night and quiet, except for the churning of the propeller of a passing boat or the screech of a tug's whistle. Marcus waved a gleaming arm at Kate. He was pulling away from Jimmy with long, powerful strokes. "Say, this is fine!" he yelled, and blew a spray of water from his lips. He enjoyed the cool touch of the waves, and forgot Kate, for the time being.

Not so Jimmy. "I'll beat y' over! Y'll never get acrost!" he called to Marcus. "Y're playin' out already!"

Marcus laughed scornfully, and set himself steadily to the work of forging ahead. He did not look back again. He resolved to make the double trip fast enough to have ten minutes with Kate before Jimmy got in. Never, indeed, had Jimmy swam so slowly as now. Why, Jimmy had been so far outstripped already that Marcus no longer was able to hear his breathing! He must be fifty feet behind.

Yes, thrice fifty feet, if Marcus had known it; for, Jimmy, for several minutes past, had been lustily swimming in-shore, and soon was clambering on the platform beneath the wharf. When he had pulled on his clothes he climbed up and walked over to where Kate still sat.

She was not surprised to see him; she had known Jimmy for some time. "Where's Marc?" she asked, laughing.

"'Bout half way over," answered Jimmy, squeezing the water out of the bottoms of his trouser legs.

"Don't get me wet, now!" admonished Kate, as he came over and sat down. Jimmy made no reply at the moment; yet, so persuasive was his tongue, that, after they had sat there for ten minutes and wondered how Marcus was progressing, Kate agreed with him that it was foolish to wait for the latter, and they took their departure. What Marcus said when he returned is not on record.

But, if this incident gives a better idea of Jimmy's strategy than of his prowess in the water, the latter was not to be scoffed at. Jimmy could swim and swim well, and he had pluck. Also, he had his poses. In evidence of this was that afternoon when he was fishing from a wharf, and a canoe capsized, a hundred yards out in the river. In the canoe had been a boy,—Joe Gans,—the son of a merchant who lived in Jimmy's neighborhood. Jimmy saw the capsize, and in fifteen minutes, had the boy on shore. The latter was weakly thankful. He knew Jimmy by sight and name, and wanted him to come to his home and see his father. But quite a little crowd of Sunday loiterers had gathered at the spot, and Jimmy, hearing their words of praise, suddenly remem-

bered a story he had read in the newspaper of a brave boy who rescued someone, and resolutely refused reward. The rescuer had been called "a modest young hero." The terms appealed to Jimmy; he determined to earn them now for himself. So he stuck his hands into his pockets, and declared, "'Taint nuthin. I wouldn't take no reward. I pulled out lots o' people bigger'n you 're." Then he pretended to return to his fishing; and listened all the while to what was said about him. Nor did he forget the day, or the name of the boy he had pulled out, or the two men he knew who had seen him do it. He was only disappointed when no mention of the episode was made in the newspapers.

In fact the newspapers did not treat Jimmy well. He was convinced of this after his resignation from the "News." No word of his departure appeared in that paper, and yet he had been a figure of importance in the "News" office and had had standing outside of it. Else, why Bill Brady's prompt request for a interview?

This interview, by the way, had been eminently satisfactory to Jimmy. All that he had hinted at to Kate that afternoon when he left the "News" had found speedy promise of fulfillment. Brady had said, "I want a boy t' run errands an' carry messages fur me. Y've got t' keep y'r eyes open an' y'r ears, too, an' y'r mouth shut. Can y' do that?"

Jimmy said he could. But the words, "run an'



carry messages " he did not like. " Y' mean t' see politicians fur y' ? " he asked.

" Yes," answered Brady, laughing.

Jimmy's ruffled pride was smoothed. " What 'll I get ? " he inquired.

" Four dollars a week."

" Any tips agoin' ? "

" That's fur you t' find out."

" I'll find 'em," responded Jimmy. " An' I 'll take th' job. I 'll start in t'-morrow."

Thus was Jimmy launched on a political career.

When Jimmy told his father that he had left the " News " and taken a job with Brady there was a row. " Hank " Devlin, as he was known to his associates, was a tall, slouching man of forty-five, with loose mouth, thin hair and general indications of having nearly reached the bottom of a long slide down hill, morally and physically. He rented one room in the second story of a cheap lodging house, and there he and Jimmy lived. He was not a normally bad man and he had the remnants of a reputable bringing up, which still enabled him, on occasion, to present a bearing of respectability and to make strangers think that they were talking to a man of some parts. But " Hank " Devlin had thought that the only way to become a successful politician was to stand in with the crowd at all times; and " standing in " being so much more to his appetite when it meant also " standing up " (to

a bar), he fell easily into the habit of spending most of his time in the saloons. Thus he acquired a wide acquaintance with and an uncertain living among the order of political hangers-on.

He was somewhat drunk and very ugly the night that Jimmy told him what he had done. "Y' young cub!" he said. "Go t' hell out a here!" He swung around viciously at Jimmy. It was night, and Jimmy was about to go to bed.

"I'm a gettin' a dollar more a week," remonstrated Jimmy.

"Y' ain't goin' t' be no bum pol'tician," returned his father. As the awful picture conjured up by these words impressed itself upon him, he went on, "No, y' ain't. Y're my son, an' y' ain't goin' 'long with that beer-guzzlin' crowd."

Jimmy was silent. He knew the rotation of his father's moods. He had been savage; now he was maudlin; next would come self-pity. After that he might want more to drink. Jimmy looked about the room. There wasn't much to see. A bed, a mattress in the corner, on which he slept; a couple of chairs, a looking glass at one end over a small table; and, against the wall, a larger table on which were some newspapers, a pipe, and a reddish-brown bottle. The cork was in the bottle—that told Jimmy what he wanted. He edged over toward it. Jimmy had no moral scruples against drunkenness, but he did not approve of it because some of its manifestations

were unpleasant and some decidedly dangerous to him when his father was the subject.

Suddenly, he declared defiantly, "Pop, I'm goin' t' be a pol'tician! I'm goin' t' keep th' job with Brady!"

"Like hell y' are!" exclaimed Devlin. He was aroused by the challenge. "I'll beat th' life out a y'!" he cried, and made a rush for Jimmy.

But Jimmy had calculated both time and space. He spun around, struck the edge of the table, upset the bottle on the floor where it went to pieces, and was at the door and in the hallway before his father could lay hands on him. There, the pursuit ending, he tip-toed down a few steps, and sat, waiting. His father probably would think of coming down for more to drink, but laziness might deter him. Half an hour went by. His father called to him several times, and got no answer. Then, Jimmy heard the bed creak violently, and, presently, snores. After that he stole into the room, and fell into the sleep of a mind free of care.

Jimmy found the work under Brady to his liking. But he also learned that politicians did something more than wear silk hats, smoke cigars, talk with newspaper men, ride on passes and boss things generally. They worked hard at times, and their work often seemed to have no immediate result. For instance, much of Brady's time was taken up in listening to complaints and trying to adjust differences.

One day it was McGonnigle, the livery stable man, who, in violent Irish, arraigned Brady for the wrong done him by the Street Commissioners. "'Twas yisterday they come an' told me Oi'd have a bill t' pay fur changin' th' curb in front av me place," he said. "Now, Brady, y' know thet's not roight."

"Why so?" inquired Brady.

"Why so? Is 't you thet's ashkin' me thet? Is 't no freedom a tall, a tall, Oim t' have frum th' governmint I hilped t' put in power? Was 't not y'rsilf thet said, whin Oi wurruked fur y' last illiction?—McGonnigle, sez you, whin th' day comes thet y' want somethin', thin d' y' come t' me. Oi'll luk afther y', sez you. An', is 't lukin' afther me t' let me be robbed 'n this way?"

Brady took a memorandum book and a blue-print from a drawer of the desk. They were in his room. "But, McGonnigle," he said, "y're asked t' pay only fur th' one hundred feet in front of y'r own place. All th' rest of th' curb along y'r side of th' block is in line. Y' don't think that th' two hundred 'n more feet of curb b'longing t' others ought t' be changed t' suit y'rs?"

"'Tis none av me business what ilse is changed," returned McGonnigle. "Th' min what owns praperty an each side av me kin pay fur th' change er not, ez they loikes; thet's their lookout; an' this Oi'm spakin' av 's mine. 'F 't wuz thim thet hilped y' make Macy, th' plumber, an assessor, why 'tis thim

thet 'll be cumplainin' like mesilf. Y' know how th' thing sthands, an' y' know, too, thet wuz no objection Oi wuz makin' whin y' ashked me t' hilp y'. Therefore, 'tis me now thet says, Am Oi t' change th' line av me curb, er am Oi not?"

Brady drummed with a pencil on the desk for a moment, and regarded the blue-print thoughtfully. Then he glanced at McGonnigle. The latter's face was uncompromising. "All right," Brady said. "We'll see what can be done about th' curb." McGonnigle went out promptly.

But, later, Jimmy was sent over to McGonnigle's with this message: "Two carriages fur two o'clock this afternoon fur some friends that want t' inspect curb lines."

The carriages drew up in front of Brady's house on time, and seven men got into them with Brady, and drove out toward the Park. Jimmy, thereupon, sat down and did some thinking. The conclusion he arrived at was, that, if repairs to one hundred feet of curbing cost the owner of a property the equivalent of the price of the actual work, plus much hard election work and the hire of two carriages for an afternoon, there must be a great deal of money made by someone in the job of street repairing. He determined to look into the matter of street work the first chance he got; but he said nothing to Brady of this.

It was some months later that Brady sent Jimmy

with a message to one Sam Showell. Showell was a younger and stronger man than Brady, but of the same school in politics. He was already a power in the adjoining ward. He had reached that point in his career where the newspapers of the opposition spoke of him as sharp and unscrupulous, and reckoned with him in their estimates of ward votes. He was a man for whose good will it was sometimes worth while for a publisher to suppress a piece of news. All that Jimmy had seen and heard of Sam Showell stimulated his interest in him. So to-day when he reached Showell's outer office and found it empty, he sat down to wait without making unnecessary noise. Voices came through a closed door giving on an inner room. Jimmy recognized the powerful voice of Showell rising above those of several other men, and was properly attentive.

Ten minutes later Showell came out. He was conspicuously dressed and broad shouldered, with a big mouth, a fist like a ham and a cigar perpetually revolving in the corner of his mouth.

He bestowed a hard glance on Jimmy. "Well, what d' y' want?" he demanded.

Jimmy announced his mission without hesitation.

"How long a y' bin here?" asked Showell.

"Couple a minutes," replied Jimmy indifferently. It was the exact truth. Jimmy had changed his position to one further removed from the communicating door two minutes previous—when he heard the

men inside moving about preparatory to coming out. Now he gave Showell the note he carried. There was no reply, Showell said; so Jimmy left.

Around the corner he found a convenient seat on a pile of lumber, and smoked a cigarette while he hugged one knee. The man who, half an hour later lifted up the beam on which Jimmy sat and upset him, declared that the boy was asleep. But Jimmy wasn't asleep; and, the next day, his reflections of that half hour found expression.

"Mr. Brady," he said; "ashes 's queer things, ain't th'?"

"How's that?" growled Brady; he was busy with some calculations on the vote at the primaries in the Twelfth Ward.

"Ashes 's queer things," repeated Jimmy. "Everybody seems t' want 'em."

"Are y' crazy?" asked Brady, looking up. But Jimmy's face, while it was, at that moment, the face of innocence, did not indicate mental weakness. "What 're y' drivin' at?" Brady added. He remembered some things about Jimmy's acuteness.

"Ashes," said Jimmy calmly. "I say, everybody seems t' want 'em. Is there much money in ashes?"

"What kind of money? What do y' mean?" Brady began to scent a revelation.

"Why, th' money what's paid fur collectin' ashes. What kind of a game is this ash collectin', anyway?"

"Game! I don't know nothin' about no game,"

returned Brady. "But there's money made in ash collectin', sure enough."

"Is th' money made 'n th' Tenth Ward?" inquired Jimmy, as if the thought had just occurred to him.

"What do *you* know about the Tenth Ward?" demanded Brady.

"I? I don't know much. Only I heard that Sam Showell has bought up all th' contractors what was goin' t' bid in th' Tenth Ward on th' ash collectin' job,—except one. 'F he gets that one he's goin' t' ask th' city twict what they paid last time fur collectin' th' ashes there; that's all."

"That's all!" echoed Brady. "Y' little devil! How did y' find that out? Where did y' hear it?"

"Yesterday afternoon—in Showell's office. He was talkin' t' a couple of fellows, an'—he talked too loud."

"I'll be damned!" remarked Brady. He never doubted that Jimmy spoke the truth. Then, suddenly, he asked, "Why didn't y' tell me that b'fore?"

"Y' didn't ask me, an' y' said t' me once t' keep my mouth shut till y' told me t' open it." Jimmy's face said that he was conscious of having obeyed orders implicitly. Brady stared at him fiercely, but it was of no avail. Jimmy's composure was perfect.

"Y're too good t' be true," sneered Brady. But, inadvertently, of course, Jimmy learned, a week later, that Sam Showell was furious. Brady had secured

an option on that one remaining contractor, and told Showell that he could buy the option at a stiff price, or meet a competitor in the bidding for the collection of ashes in the Tenth Ward.

The next day Jimmy remarked to Brady who was in good humor: "Mr. Showell 'd given me some-thin' t' keep my mouth shut about that ash collectin'."

Brady gave no sign that he heard, and Jimmy went on reflectively, "Yes, I must 'a lost a couple a dollars by it."

Brady regarded him with admiration, and pulled out three one dollar bills. "Don't y' let Showell, er anybody else, make y' furget that y're workin' fur me!" he said.

"No, sir," said Jimmy, complacently pocketing the money.

Yet Jimmy had thoughts above money. Sometimes his imagination bore him away for the moment. But he always quickly brought himself to earth with some practical consideration; for Jimmy lived in this world, and kept his feet upon the earth with rare exceptions. He pressed along a path that led up a considerable hill, but not among the clouds. If, occasionally, he got into a rarer atmosphere than was to be found at his normal level it was because he was always curious. There was nothing too trivial for him to examine, at least by a glance. No bird rested in a tree too high for him to chance a throw at it. Jimmy, perhaps, had no definite aims as yet;

but he did have a very certain appreciation of opportunities as they presented themselves. He looked ahead just far enough to insure the success of what he was then doing, or about to do.

So it was that he got his education. Most of it he picked up along the road; his early schooling furnished a commentary upon the dilatory methods of the educational authorities. A compulsory education obtained by state law. Until he was sixteen years old Jimmy should have been in school. But in five years he had learned all that he believed he needed, and so persuaded his father. The rest was a mere matter of avoiding the teachers and cajoling insistent inspectors with regard to his age. The education he got at school was superficial, but his energy and his alert brain made the best possible use of it, and gained for him enough of other knowledge to make him more than a match for his schoolmates who were law-abiding, industrious pupils.

So the three years following his entry into Brady's employ he spent,—incidentally, in doing the bidding of Brady; specifically, in establishing himself in the great world of politics. The idea of a political life, at first only a dim possibility among many, gradually grew and took on more positive lines. It was not the allurements of power which drew him on, though the field which politics opened up for the exercise of the faculty of leadership that had been

his from his newspaper days was plain and fertile. In honesty to Jimmy—and Jimmy, even in his poses, was honest to himself,—it must be recorded that it was the material profits which accrued to the politicians of his acquaintance that made him think of becoming a politician. Later, when he began to draw upon his resources in earnest, he identified that secret joy which came of finding that to speak was to be obeyed; and, then—then, Jimmy could not have drawn back, even if power and the comforts of life had not been spelled for him in the word—Politics.

But, in those first three years Jimmy labored faithfully to earn his place. He had run errands and carried messages at first—and watched and listened and remembered. Then, as Brady discovered that Jimmy did these last things with as good will and to more effect than he did the first, it became Jimmy's part to watch, listen and report; the running of errands and carrying of messages were now merely nominal, and Jimmy, seeing that these had their use, made no open objection to them. But he strove, none the less to make them superfluous. So well, too, did he strive that, in the third year of his apprenticeship, the advertisements of his servitude were removed.

Therefore, behold Jimmy at nineteen—five feet eight inches high, slender, his face freckled, his nose still unmistakably a pug, his chin beginning to

square itself, his eyes keen, but less easily read than formerly; and his lips, for all their humorous twist at the corners, seeming to be aware that they guarded what already was spoken of as "Jimmy's word."

Jimmy dressed with more care than he once did. His pocketbook permitted and his observation advised it. He had seen neat attire gain a hearing when cleverness found no chance to speak; and, as his life so far has made plain, he did not believe in neglecting anything that might contribute to the ends which he desired. He wore as good clothes as he could afford to wear, and already was distinguished among the men with whom he went by the absence from his person of big, seal rings, ponderous watch chains and brilliant studs. I say "men" advisedly; for Jimmy's age was the thing most often misquoted. It was generally believed that he was "twenty-four and old for his years"—which opinion Jimmy did not take pains to contradict.

But Kate Mayne did. She took a particular delight in revealing what she knew Jimmy considered his shortcomings. Perhaps, this was because some of her own deficiencies had disappeared in the years that saw her short dresses lengthen and that thick pig-tail coil itself on a shapely head. She had rejoiced in her long legs once because they enabled her to preserve the principle of mine and thine which,

in the world of newspaper selling, is not recognized as sound unless enforced by swiftness and strength. Now, she was quite conscious that her length of limb was a becoming attribute, and she took pains to wear gowns that were worthy of a decidedly comely figure. She had good taste in such things; that was why she found steady employment at fair wages as a dressmaker's assistant. The world was prosperous with Kate, and she looked out upon it from those fine gray eyes of hers with a new sense of its possibilities and a growing pride in externals which, later on, furnished her with some regretful moments.

She knew that she had a pretty nose, that the droop at the corners of her mouth was an engaging irregularity, and that many of her sex would have given much to possess her white skin. And, though her schooling had been almost a minus quantity, she was remedying that as far as her opportunities allowed. She had quick perceptions; and, now that her desire to be something better than the girls around her was stimulated, she set industriously to work. She followed no system in this, but she let slip no chance to learn. Her imitative faculties were active, and she picked up a great deal unconsciously. She took consolation for her immediate shortcomings in the fact that, in a battle of wits, she could put almost any of them to rout and that, as Jimmy expressed it, she talked "like a house

afire." At the dances at Industrial Hall she found the time all too short to satisfy the demands of the gentlemen of her acquaintance who sought her company in the "intermissions" as often as they did on the floor.

For Kate had many admirers—and one friend. She was not liked by the girls, and this, with some reason, she put down to jealousy. As for the men, with that one notable exception, they insisted upon making their acquaintance a matter of the heart. Besieged as she was, her vanity served her this good turn. It played the chaperone and would not let her forget. So, though she had been almost alone in the world for two years, Kate at nineteen maintained her right to the respectful attentions of a score of men, and gave her confidences to one.

Of course, this one was Jimmy; for he was the only person who neither was envious of her nor flattered her. She had been his "steady" until increasing years made such a relation ridiculous as well as juvenile. Then, when a deeper feeling might have attached him to her, the affairs of a larger world crowded in upon him and,—well, he spoke no word of love to her. She was piqued as she realized his failure to live up to what was his clear duty; but pique is an evanescent spice, and, while it led Kate to do some silly things and made Jimmy wonder for a day or two, whether, after all, woman was not a study worthy of attention, it soon evapo-

rated. Kate remained Kate, and Jimmy, Jimmy; and that was all there was to it.

If Kate had shown pique to Marcus Doran there might have been serious and more immediate results. But Marcus had attained that attitude of maturity which views women of nineteen as young girls and women of twenty-five as the only fitting companions for men of twenty-one. Besides, to the surprise of every one, he had developed an ambition, and had thrown himself with such vigor into the business of street-paving that the contractors by whom he was employed took a notion to make a protege of him in their pseudo-political work.

When Marcus reached his majority he was in a fair way to be a rich man some day. He had fulfilled his boyish promise of being good looking. He had already begun to take on flesh, but was tall and broad. His face was full and dark with the thickening beard which he kept smooth shaven; his heavy hair was always well brushed. He had a habit of wearing his coat thrown back over a stylish vest, which, he fancied, gave him a prosperous appearance. His eyes were too small and his lips too full, but a straight nose and fine teeth made these defects less noticeable. He was looked at a good deal, and he knew it, and had a better opinion of himself than ever before.

Jimmy spoke of Marcus one day to Kate. Jimmy never went to dances, and so he did not see Kate in

all her glory; but he heard about her and he had also heard about the doings of Marcus—all of this information coming to his ears because he put himself in the way of it. So, "Now, there's Marcus Doran," he said to Kate; "he's goin' t' make his pile, they say."

"Is he?" remarked Kate, indifferently.

"Yes," went on Jimmy; "and, of course, he'll marry—some day."

"I guess so," said Kate.

"Then, his wife 'll have plenty of money t' spend," hazarded Jimmy.

"Will she?" said Kate.

"Won't she?" asked Jimmy.

"I wonder," Kate returned. There was a pause.

"And *you* like money," Jimmy resumed.

"Yes——."

"And do y' like Marcus?"

"Are you still talkin' about him?"

"Yes," replied Jimmy; "him and you." He waited a moment, but got no response, and he said slowly, "When *are* y' goin' t' get married?"

"Oh, dear!" said Kate; "I ain't thinking of getting married. Are you?"

"No," said Jimmy decidedly; "I ain't. But," suddenly looking her in the face: "did *you* ever think of marryin' Marcus Doran?"

"Not on your life!" returned Kate quickly. She laughed loudly. "Why, I wouldn't marry that

stuck-up thing for—nothing!” She laughed again in derision. But Jimmy thought her scorn a little over-done.

“Well, I wouldn’t marry *him*,” he said quite gravely.

“Why?” asked Kate. This was becoming interesting.

“Well, I—just wouldn’t, that’s all,” replied Jimmy. Then his lips closed; and Kate knew that it was useless to try to open them. But she made a mental note of one thing—Jimmy did not like Marcus. That made her decide to inspect Marcus for herself.

That Jimmy did not approve of Marcus was the exact truth. Marcus no longer thrashed Jimmy; indeed, their intercourse was marked by a freedom from violence both of tongue and act which, once, would have branded them as duds and cowards among their associates. But the hostility between them was not removed. They met quite often; for they were in the same ward, and Brady was frequently called on by Marcus’s employer, who “wanted something arranged” in the way of a municipal contract; and Jimmy, now and then, acted as ambassador. At these times he was almost sure to come across Marcus, and hear things said about him and to him. All of which made Marcus dislike Jimmy more than ever.

Then, too, Jimmy knew such a lot about the con-

tract prices of street paving, and the wages of the men, and the profits of the contractor, and just where the poorest paving had been laid by Marcus's people, and how narrowly they had escaped a Grand Jury summons as a consequence of charging for repairs that had not been made.

And Jimmy distrusted Marcus; not because of any of these lapses, for they were what everyone expected and a perquisite of the municipal contractor—but because, in private life as well as public, Marcus was one of the great crowd of “slippery ones,” and was weak. Jimmy could not get over that worship of personal strength and regard for a promise once made.

If Jimmy condoned cardinal faults in any one it was in his father. Indeed, he gave much time to shielding the latter from the fruits of his folly. The feeling which made him do this certainly was not a sense of filial duty, and to have called it affection, maybe, would have been to strain a point. “Hank” Devlin did nothing to cultivate love in his son; on the contrary, he abused him regularly, and increased his daily potations. The secret of his ability to recover apparently lost ground at intervals remained with himself and his son. What went on between his father and himself was never mentioned by Jimmy; and Brady and the rest, perhaps, had not given it a thought until that evening when the thing was poked under their very noses.

Brady and two other men and Jimmy were seated in Brady's room, waiting for "Hank" Devlin who was to bring in a report. It was in the matter of a candidate of the party for City Councils. Brady had his man for the place picked out; but he needed funds to start the campaign ball rolling, and among those he counted on drawing upon, was one Joseph Gans, a wealthy merchant, a member of the party and also something of a reformer. Devlin, for various reasons, had seemed to be the most available man to interview Gans on this point, and to Devlin the task had been entrusted. It was a delicate task, too; for Gans's action in this connection was likely to be contagious and Gans's contribution generous.

Jimmy had said nothing when he heard Brady tell his father what he was to do, but he kept close watch on his father that evening until seven o'clock. Then his duties called him to Brady's presence. Devlin was to call on Gans at eight o'clock. So, with only an hour intervening, Jimmy thought he could leave his father in safety. Yet, before he went, he said: "Say, see here, Pop! y' don't want t' go t' Gans's t'night if y' ain't feeling good. Y'll get y'rself in a bad hole, if y' do."

"Shut up!" returned Devlin; "an' get out a here. I know my business, an' I don't want none a y'r talk."

Jimmy said nothing more. But, now, when, an

hour late, Devlin came into Brady's room Jimmy knew, at once, what had happened. Devlin was drunk. He walked into the room pretty straight, but immediately dropped into a chair. "Well?" he said defiantly.

"Well?" repeated Brady angrily. He saw what was wrong. "What did Gans say?" he demanded.

"Shaid he wouldn't give a cent t' a lot a drunkards; that's what he shaid!" answered Devlin thickly. He was brazen, and glared at Brady. Then, he saw something funny in the situation, and laughed.

"Shut up!" cried Brady, beside himself with anger and disappointment at the failure of the mission. "Shut up, y' drunken loafer! Y'll pay fur this,—fur what y've done t'night!"

Jimmy, who sat near Brady, got on his feet. "Say! Mr. Brady," he said; "you're makin' a big mistake." His voice was quiet, but there was something in his face that made them all wonder. "You're makin' a mistake," he repeated; "b'cause th' old man ain't been t' see Gans yet."

"What's that?" grumbled Devlin, stirring from the stupor that had begun to steal over him in the heat of the room. But Jimmy gave no heed to the question.

Brady turned to Jimmy. "How do y' make that out?" he demanded. "What 're y' givin' us? Ain't

he said he's bin there? And didn't he say Gans told him we was——?"

Jimmy calmly interrupted him. "I heard him say that," he said. "But *that* ain't nuthin'. He don't know where he's been; anybody could see that. And, anyway, I know he ain't been there; I knowed he wasn't goin' when I come in here t'night."

"Y' did!" exclaimed Brady. "Why didn't y' say so, then? What was th' matter?"

Jimmy's eye-lids never quivered as he said bluntly, "I told th' old man not t' go t' Gans's when I left him this evening. I saw he'd knock us out, if he did."

"Who tol' me not t' go?" broke in Devlin, dimly conscious that he was being spoken of.

Jimmy remained unmoved by the query and finished, "And y' see, I knowed what I was talking about."

Brady stared at Devlin and, then, at Jimmy. He was puzzled. "Y're lyin!" he declared to Jimmy, trying to shake him; but Jimmy only smiled a little, thin smile, and answered, "Have it y'r own way. Only I don't see what's th' use of making out that Gans 's turned against us when y' ain't give him a show t' say so."

It was reasoning in a circle, but the argument struck Brady as plausible. He sat a few seconds without speaking. Devlin's snores told that his energies had been exhausted. "How 'll y' find out

'bout Gans?" Brady suddenly asked, his fears and anger reviving. "Do y' think that drunken fool there c'd find out? Not much! I'm done with him. He slipped up this time, and an' he'll never get another chance from me. He can go t' hell, for all I care."

"Just th' same he'll get Gans for y', if he's t' be got," returned Jimmy quickly. He looked Brady squarely in the eyes.

"Who says he will?" retorted Brady.

"I do," said Jimmy.

"You!" began Brady scornfully, and, then, paused. He reasoned that at least the case could be no worse than it was. "Let's see him do it, then!" he challenged.

"All right," returned Jimmy. He walked over to his father. "Come on, Pop!" he said, shaking him.

Devlin at last got slowly to his feet. He had reached a state of stupid obedience, and clung to his son's arm. Jimmy walked to the door, one arm securely locked in his father's elbow. In the doorway he looked over his shoulder at Brady.

"You'll hear t'-morrow night that th' old man's got Gans all right," he said, and passed out.

JIMMY really deserved a good deal of credit for the way he won over Gans and redeemed his promise to Brady that his father would bring in Gans's contribution to the campaign fund. To be candid, when Jimmy made this promise and aided his father's unsteady feet to carry him from the room, he had only a hazy idea of how he was to go about the thing. Once he got his father into bed, he sat down to think; and, at ten o'clock, marched to Gans's house and rang the bell. "Tell Mr. Gans, please, that Jimmy Devlin 'd like t' see him a minute," he said. "Tell him it's about his son," he added. Then he walked into the parlor, for all the world as if he was quite familiar with the house.

It was the mention of his son which brought Gans down to see Jimmy. The name Devlin had only unpleasant significance.

Jimmy was standing by the fireplace. "Is y'r son at home?" he asked.

"No, what's th' matter? Has anything happened to him?" replied Gans anxiously. His son was the apple of Gans's eye; and Jimmy had found this out, as he had planned to do.

"No," said Jimmy; "he's all right, I guess. But he's been in a bad fix."

"What's happened? Tell me quick," urged Gans.

"He upset in th' river, and come near bein' drowned," declared Jimmy. "But he's safe—now," he added.

"Good Lord!" ejaculated Gans. "Where is he? How did it come about? When was it?"

"Oh, he wasn't upset t'-day; that was two years ago—th' fifteenth of last month," explained Jimmy.

"Two years ago?" repeated Gans. "Here, what are you driving at? Where *is* my boy, anyhow? Speak out, quick!"

"Yes," said Jimmy unhurried; "just two years ago th' fifteenth of last month. It was on a Sunday afternoon, and *I* pulled him out. Perhaps, he spoke t' you about it? Wisht he was here now; he'd tell y' it was all straight."

"Where *is* he?" demanded Gans. A faint recollection of the incident Jimmy referred to came to him, but, first of all, he must be satisfied that his son was safe. The proceedings were extraordinary; Jimmy's coolness and sudden revival of an old story made him suspicious of some new danger to his son.

"I don't know where y'r son is t'night," Jimmy said. "I just dropped in t' see you on my own account; *he* asked me t'—once—but I ain't had much time since then."

Gans drew a sigh of relief and his wonderment grew. He struggled between suspicion of Jimmy's aims and amazement at Jimmy's equanimity. It was the first which led him to say, "Come now! what are you up to?"

"Up t'? I ain't up t' nuthin'," replied Jimmy. "But I thought y' might be glad t' see me' and I wanted t' see you," he added.

"What about?" asked Gans sharply.

"Well, about y'r son, and pol'tics, and—my father."

"What—what have they got to do with each other?" Gans's perplexity grew.

"It is this way," returned Jimmy. "Y' see you think a good deal of your son, and I think th' same about my father, an', I thought there might be some-thin' comin' t' me. You remember th' old man was 'round here t'night, and—he hadn't no business t' come, for somebody 'd gone and got him 'full.' But they told him he had t' come, and he did, and you turned him down. Now, what I want t' know is, ain't you goin' t' put him straight on th' thing?"

Gans's face had become serious; he connected Devlin's visit with Jimmy, and he saw how he was being worked upon to reverse his judgment. He had it in mind to tell Jimmy plainly that he was not to be cajoled into doing what was asked.

But Jimmy did not let him make that answer. "Th' day I see that canoe upset," he remarked, as

though refreshing Gans's recollection of the occurrence; "I jumped in and yanked your son out. I wasn't askin' nuthin' 'bout what kind of a feller he was, nor what kind you was, neither. I just pulled him out of th' wet and he wouldn't a kept up long, if I hadn't done it, I guess."

"Who put you up to this?" Gans asked. He was stricken with admiration of Jimmy, and relenting; but his suspicions died hard. It was not until Jimmy fired up, and declared: "Nobody put me up t' nothin!" that he capitulated. There was no deception in Jimmy's face, Gans told himself; which, as a general observation, was the finest compliment yet paid Jimmy's subtlety, and, in this instance, happened also to be the exact truth.

"What do you want me to do?" Gans asked, after a moment's reflection.

"Give Brady something for that campaign fund—what my old man asked you for."

"All right," said Gans slowly; "I'll give it to you,—now; how 'll that do?"

"No," returned Jimmy; "th' old man 'll come 'round t'morrow night, and, if it's all th' same t' you, I wisht y' give it t' *him*."

"Yes, I'll do that; but what for?" replied Gans; and, when Jimmy laughed and said, "Oh, nuthin'!" Gans wondered still more. He perceived faintly that there were depths in Jimmy which it was not permitted him to sound. He had a notion that he

would like to know more of this young man. "Come round and see me soon," he said to Jimmy at the door. "I may have something for you to do," he added.

"Thank y'," answered Jimmy. "I'll come round and see y', but I got all I can do now. I'm workin' with Brady."

And it was working with Brady rather than for Brady that Jimmy was doing then, and continued to do for some years. His father died from too zealous pursuit of bar-room politics and Jimmy set up for himself in a modest little room in his old neighborhood. But almost all of his hours were spent in Brady's company, and it was not long before Brady himself began to say, "Jimmy thinks this," and "Jimmy said he wouldn't do that." It was a habit easy to fall into when one enjoyed Jimmy's companionship and counsel for any length of time. Jimmy had not developed domineering ways, but he had a quiet air of certainty about him that was wonderfully convincing, and his scorn was something fine. It underran his words and, detecting it, one suddenly forgot Jimmy's stature and felt crushed. Fortunately, too, for Jimmy, as his juvenility wore off it was succeeded by few of the affectations of the young man. There was a great deal of hard common sense in him; and, besides, he had such an overwhelming appreciation of the ridiculous that, now and then, he laughed at himself

when others took him most seriously as he, indeed, had meant to take himself—at the moment.

But it was not only by counsel that Jimmy began to make for himself the place in the political world which he was to fill later on with such conspicuous success. He was being trained in a school which used no books; hard knocks cured the learner of follies; the prizes were inexhaustible and rich, and the lessons were taught at the polls, in the rooms of the ward leaders and at the street corners. From the day that Jimmy became Brady's errand boy and messenger he saw it was by studying the weaknesses of other men that one made himself strong. After all, be the issue what it might and the principle at stake right or wrong, it was the strongest man that won in the end; for the laborer was worthy of his hire. So Jimmy began to study men and, consequently, was always among men. It was not long before he knew them all by name, and, within a few years, these names were so many labels to particular qualities and phases of usefulness. In this respect Jimmy only carried the methods of Brady and the rest a step further, and, by his quick perceptions and that trustworthy ally, his memory, was able to suggest a course of action, or to fix his position more speedily than were those around him.

One of the first conclusions he arrived at—a lonely reflection of Sunday School days—was that

Goliath would have been a poor politician, but that David, probably, would have made a good one. Not because David was brave and the champion of the oppressed, but because his weapon had a longer range than Goliath's. He put the opinion to Brady thus, one night when Brady was trying to draw him out and he was willing to be drawn:

"There's no use tryin' t' lick a feller that's got th' stone-pile all t' himself. It's a great sight better t' let him chase y' till y' light on a stone-pile fur y'rself."

"There ain't much nerve in doin' that," scoffed Brady, to see what would be the answer.

"Nerve's all right when y' got t' take medicine; but I'd rather not get laid up," Jimmy replied. "When you got th' rocks t' fire at th' other feller *then* y' can even up on th' nerve business."

"Smash 'em! that's what I say," chimed in Brady.

"But don't get in trouble doin' it!" cautioned Jimmy. "Now, I'd rather not use any rocks at all, myself," he went on. "Y're too liable t' break a window, and be pulled in for it. Th' best way is t' get th' other feller t' throw th' rocks and keep close t' a window y'rself. Then, by and by, when a window is cracked, you can stand round an' let somebody else do th' fighting for y'."

Brady laughed. "Y're a good law-abidin' citizen, ain't ye', Jimmy?" he said mockingly.

“Yes, I’d stick by th’ laws,” returned Jimmy; “but I’d see th’ laws was th’ right kind.” Jimmy’s smile as he said this was beautiful to see.

The opinion tickled Brady. It was a good deal to his own way of thinking; but, not being gifted with more than average ingenuity, the first failure of his strategy made him resort to violence. It was in this respect that he was weak. Jimmy taught him that at the primary elections one autumn.

There was the beginning of a reform movement in the ward. The Citizens’ League had come into existence, and, wonderful to relate, had held together and got out of its swaddling clothes. Now, it was doing some daring things, talking about a good many more it was going to do, and, here and there, giving annoyance to the “regulars” among the politicians. Brady, up to this time, had not been seriously interfered with by it. But, during the summer, the League had worked energetically among the voters of the Twelfth Ward, and expected, with some reason, to carry the elections there in a number of the districts. Brady was for intimidating the League’s workers.

“Give ’em a good scare, an’ they’ll run,” he declared. He knew of a score of “bruisers” who would delight in the thing.

Jimmy objected. “You’re likely t’ run up against a snag,” he said. “They’re onto that game. Even if th’ police want t’ keep their eyes shut, they’ll have

t' keep 'em open this time; th' League's watching th' police and us, too."

Then, Brady spoke of another way. He did not say so in as many words, for that was never done, but everyone knew that he meant that something might happen to the ballot boxes—if occasion demanded.

Jimmy again objected. "What's th' use?" he said. "We can vote enough men t' down 'em."

"Not with those 'watchers'"; returned Brady. He was rather glad to be able to answer Jimmy with his own words.

"Why not give th' 'watchers' something else t' think about?" suggested Jimmy, unembarrassed.

"What do y' mean? How 're y' goin' t' do it?" asked Brady.

"Oh, I don't know. I ain't thought much about it yet. But all y' got t' do is t' give 'em something t' amuse 'em; I bet they'd trip up, if y' give 'em half a chance."

"Well, go ahead, an' trip 'em up, 'f y' can," returned Brady. "Only don't y' get us in a hole." The caution was not needed, and Brady should have known it. But he was a little sore over Jimmy's objections to his plans. "I'll fix it so we won't get left in th' end," he concluded.

So it was understood. Brady would see that enough votes were "counted in" for his candidates to secure their nomination—failing an actual deposit

of those votes at the polls. And Jimmy—Jimmy was to do what he could to check interference at the polling places—that is interference with the men who came there prepared to vote often enough to make Brady's candidates successful.

On the evening of the primary elections Jimmy was moving about the polling places at which it was known that the Citizens' League would concentrate its efforts. At these places he soon picked out two well dressed young men who were acting as "watchers" for the League. One of these was young Gans whom Jimmy had once rescued. Their business was to stop "repeating" (the casting of more than one vote by each man) and to see that no one who was not on the official list of voters deposited a vote. They were alert and well informed apparently, and as Jimmy was aware, were within their rights in doing what they did. As it was they were a serious menace to the interests of Brady. After Jimmy had seen them stop and turn back, or "protest" half a dozen men who came up to vote, he thought the occasion ripe to act.

The next time that they approached an intending voter Jimmy went up to the police officer nearby. "There's those fellers," he said. "Now, run 'em in. You know th' charge."

The officer stepped up to the young men. "Y'll have t' come with me," he said. "Y're under arrest."

“Nonsense!” returned young Gans. “Nonsense!” We’re doing what we’ve a right to do, and you know it. We’re duly appointed ‘watchers’ of the Citizens’ League. We’re entirely within the law. If you arrest us, you do it at your peril.”

“That’s all right,” said the officer. “I know what I’m doin’. I’ve been watchin’ you two. Come along! Y’ can make y’r kick at th’ station house.”

The men protested again. Then one of them got angry and was for resisting the officer; Gans persuaded him that this would be a mistake. They walked with the officer to the station house, a crowd following and having plenty of fun at their expense. Jimmy, discreetly, had kept in the background; neither of the men knew that he had had a hand in their arrest.

“What’s th’ charge?” asked the house sergeant.

“Impersonatin’ an officer,” answered the policeman who had brought them in.

“What?” exclaimed Gans. But the officer went on imperturbably: “They was telling voters t’ move on.”

“What have you got t’ say?” demanded the sergeant, addressing the men.

“That we weren’t impersonating an officer, that we haven’t broken any law, and that we were simply doing our duty as regularly appointed ‘watchers’ of the Citizens’ League to assist in preventing illegal voting,” replied Gans quickly.

“What have y’ got t’ prove y’r charge, officer?” asked the sergeant.

“This here!” replied the policeman. Before either of the prisoners could resist the movement he had pulled open the coat of the nearest of them and disclosed a detective’s badge, pinned on the lapel of the vest. Its wearer lost command of himself.

The sergeant drew in his breath sharply. “How comes it y’re wearin’ this?” he said. “Are you an officer?”

“I demand that we be taken before a magistrate,” said Gans who seemed to have his wits about him. “We won’t answer any questions here; and you’ve got to give us a regular hearing.”

The sergeant knew that the demand was a proper one—one that he could not, with safety, refuse. He told the officer to take the men to the magistrate of that district. Jimmy ran ahead to the magistrate’s; but, when they arrived, he was outside, and followed them in.

The magistrate made quick work of the case. He heard the officer, he heard the men, and he examined the badge. “I’ll commit you for a further hearing,” he said. “If you are ‘watchers’ for the Citizens’ League they will identify you, and, *perhaps*, they can explain about this badge. Take them out, officer!” The officer “took them out.”

Jimmy hastened to the polls. But there was no need of his services there now. Brady’s men voted

as often and as freely as they wanted, and Jimmy knew that Brady would not be called on to adopt his radical plan of "adjusting" the vote. So he strolled back to headquarters.

"How's everything goin'?" asked Brady.

"All serene," answered Jimmy. "Any one can count th' ballots in th' boxes I saw being filled. Our man's got a solid majority."

"How do y' know?"

"Saw th' votes put in."

"But what about them League 'watchers?' Was they blind?"

"No, but they wasn't there but a little while; they got—cold—and went indoors."

"What 're y' gettin' at?"

"Oh, nuthin'. Only they was so anxious t' get all th' cards in their hands that I just helped 'em t' a few of mine; and *my* cards was marked."

Jimmy was in particularly good humor, but affected unconcern. Brady was one of those with whom such a cheap deceit had effect. "It was this way," went on Jimmy. "They was goin' t' make everything dead sure this time, they thought; and so they hired that detective, Kelly t' go along with 'em and help 'em in their spottin'. I heard that, and I put Kelly ont' a game. He got t' talkin' t' 'em about how useful a detective's badge was, and Gans—one of th' fellers, that thinks he's as smart as y' make 'em,—said it would be a good idea t' get a

badge like that, and wear it. He asked Kelly if it couldn't be managed. Kelly laid off and said it might get him in trouble. But, by and by, he caved in, and one of 'em got th' badge. They promised Kelly they'd keep it hid, and only show it if they had t'. Kelly told me what'd happened, and I put th' officer at th' place they was at ont' th' thing, early in th' evenin'. When I dropped round, later, I seen those fellers gettin' in their fine work, knocking out our men. Then I give th' signal t' th' officer, and he pulled 'em in. Of course, I had th' sergeant primed, and I put th' magistrate ont' it as soon as I heard they was goin' there. Kelly had cleared out when they was nabbed; and they'll stand by him, any way. He's got th' call on 'em, for he give 'em a song an' dance about th' risk he was runnin'. So, now, they're in th' station house where they're likely t' spend a part of th' night, and—and, when they're got out, it won't make no difference t' us, anyway."

Brady, listening to this recital, secretly confessed that there still were a number of things in political strategy which he had to learn. Which, by the way, was a modest statement of Jimmy's personal opinion of Brady.

EARLY one afternoon about two weeks later Jimmy went to his room to pack a satchel. Brady wanted him to go up to the State Capital to see about the contract for some school supplies out of which he expected to reap the political middleman's share of profit. But Jimmy missed the train which he should have taken on that day.

On his bureau he found a letter bearing the date of the day before. He recognized the handwriting at once, and tore open the envelope. The letter was as follows:

"DEAR JIMMY: When you get this I'll be Mrs. Marcus Doran. I've been thinking about it a good while and I'd told you about it only I knew you wouldn't like it. That's the only reason I'm kind of sorry. But I'm making up for keeping it such a secret by telling you now, before anyone else knows anything about it. It is a dead secret and even Marcus doesn't know I'm writing this to you. We've run away, across the river; we can get married there without making any fuss—the way Marcus wanted. Come round and see us as soon as we get back. I want you to like Marcus better, and you will—when I'm Mrs. Marcus Doran instead of—

"KATE MAYNE."

Jimmy read this letter twice without pause. At first he almost thought it might be one of Kate's jokes; she was always trying to plague him. But soon he understood that it was written earnestly, and he leaned against the window frame, looking down into the street and seeing nothing there, while a great many things passed swiftly through his mind. For the first time since his manhood days he felt a curious stirring at his heart which hurt him. Somehow, he hated himself because this thing had come to pass. He wondered if he could have prevented it, if he had known about it in advance. But, then, he gave himself a shake, and all his thoughts became centered on Kate and on what she had done and what would come of it.

Kate, the high-spirited, the clever, the ambitious,—married! He could hardly realize it. And to Marcus whose spirits were most often nothing more than loud words, whose cleverness was a very doubtful craftiness, whose ambitions were little more than greed! Marcus who was shifty and selfish! It was Marcus who once had declared in Jimmy's hearing, "Only a fool lets a girl coax him int' marryin' her." Yet this was the same Marcus who had now married a girl whom, Jimmy told himself, he had treated all along with indifference. But had he? Jimmy remembered incidents that brought him up sharply. Suddenly, he understood that self-occupation had made him blind to many things about Kate and



Marcus. He was surprised to discover how stupid he had been.

He could almost recall the day now on which Kate had said to him, "Marcus ain't so bad. He's beginning to take notice of things." She laughed in a peculiar way that meant nothing to Jimmy at the time, for he was very busy just then with some plans of his own. Later on he had come upon Marcus, one evening, escorting Kate to a dance, and she had given Jimmy a saucy nod and immediately had something exceedingly confidential to say to her companion. Jimmy had almost remembered to speak to Kate about that snub, but he had not done it. Again, once when Jimmy had come to call upon her, she had told him over the banisters that she was going out, and would he come in some other time? No day was mentioned and her voice was very impatient—Jimmy had noticed that. But, while this was not the way Kate had been used to treat him, any disappointment he felt was obliterated by the pressure of other subjects upon his attention. The nearest he could remember to having come to a realization of the truth was one afternoon when, driving through the Park, with some visiting politicians, they had passed a smart looking buggy. It was drawn up at the side of an unfrequented road. In it were Marcus and Kate. They were deeply interested in each other's company. Jimmy had taken off his hat unnoticed by either of them. Chagrin

might have worked upon his feelings at this discomfiture, if he had had less distinguished persons as his guests. As it was——

He checked his reminiscences. What was the use of all this now? The thing was done. Kate was married, and he (Jimmy) was—very busy with the affairs of his own life. At the present moment he had an important and delicate piece of business to transact. With a little sigh, of which he was scarcely conscious, he folded the letter slowly, put it into his pocket, and began to pack his satchel. But it took a long time to pick out the few articles he wanted. Now and then, he found himself standing inactive with some piece of clothing in his hand, his mind wandering over things furthest removed from the packing of a satchel or the details of a contract for school supplies. Again, he was standing by the window, gazing vacantly across the house tops, wondering where——? It could be nothing else than where he would be if he had not missed that train to the State Capital. So, with each recovery of himself, he pursed his lips and shook his head angrily.

But, for some time afterward, these spells of unaccountable preoccupation overtook Jimmy, and he had to bring himself smartly to book by application to his immediate duties and plans. Indeed he came so to fear the influence of this subtle abstraction that, lest he might stimulate it, he did not go to

see Kate and Marcus for several weeks after they returned from their wedding trip. He was too busy to go, he reasoned.

Kate and Marcus had rented one of a row of tiny, two-story, brick houses not far from Jimmy's rooms. Marcus was prospering. His position with the firm of contractors had become an important one. He was a good deal among politicians; occasionally, he and Jimmy came upon one another. But no words were wasted between them.

Kate was like a bird with a nest to line. She was always at home, running up and down stairs, fixing this and that, a dozen times changing the place of some piece of furniture, cocking her head sideways to determine the effect of a picture or hanging. She sang all day—to herself. She was in the Heaven of her girlish dreams. In the morning she clung to Marcus till the last moment, and, with jealous eyes, watched him swagger down the street. She was at the window when he returned in the evening; his latchkey became almost a superfluity to him. All of the joy which Kate did not find in Marcus's big figure, black eyes and indulgent approval of her, she found in the six rooms which made up her world. Even Jimmy passed from her mind for the time being.

Then, one day, she came upon him on the street, and she recollected with a little pang how she had

neglected him. "Oh, Jimmy!" she exclaimed as he took her hand. "Won't you come and see us?"

Jimmy's eyes twinkled. "It's real kind of you t' remember my name," he said stiffly.

Kate was penitent. "Oh, you know——" she began.

"Yes, I know," remarked Jimmy significantly.

"But you didn't let me finish," she protested. "I was going to say that I've been busy—fixing up the house and all that sort of thing. I didn't want anybody to see it till it was done. But now it's ready. Won't you come?"

"Yes, I'll come—to-night," replied Jimmy.

And come he did. Marcus said "Good evening" to him, remarked that he had an errand to do down town, and left. Jimmy gave no sign that he was disturbed, and Kate that evening, for the first time, found herself talking of other things than Marcus and the house. When she realized this, after Jimmy was gone, she was puzzled to say how it had been.

But Jimmy did not repeat his visit, and, when next she saw him, Kate chided him for his delinquency. "When are you coming in again?" she asked.

"Don't know. I'm afraid of makin' Marcus worse."

"Marcus worse?" echoed Kate.

"Yes," said Jimmy, wagging his head. "His

eyesight 's failin', and every time he comes across me it seems t' get worse."

Kate's pretty eyebrows drew together. Then, various remarks made by Marcus about Jimmy recurred to her. She laughed to cover her confusion. But Jimmy made no mistake about that laugh. He knew that Marcus's dislike for him was a real disappointment to her. He was sorry for this. He was quite sure that her hope of making them friends would never be fulfilled. He believed that Kate, deep down in her heart, acknowledged as much. Marcus made no effort to conceal his animosity; Jimmy's face grew hard when he saw Marcus. Indeed, it was for Kate's sake that Jimmy kept out of Marcus's way as much as he could, and had plausible excuses when Kate rebuked him for not calling more often.

Marcus, for some time, believed himself perfectly happy in his home, and contented with his success elsewhere. He was making money; he generally managed to add something to his regular earnings by secret manipulation of contracts. Among his associates he was spoken of as "a sharp one." They patted him on the back, and he spent his money freely among them. He delighted to affect the ways of "a good fellow." All his acquaintances declared that he was "dead lucky." For a while it was amusing and flattered his vanity to say to them, "I guess I won't be with you t'night. My wife—

jealous as she can be. Can't break her in all at once, you know."

It was his habit, when he came home, to stretch himself out, and let Kate wait on him. She was *so* anxious to do it, he felt that he was quite indulgent. Like some big dog he took possession of the most comfortable lounging place and blinked his eyes while she ministered to his wants, now hurrying supper, now fetching him an old coat, now a cigar or pipe. And he would drop her a lazy word of approval. "You're a pretty good sort of a wife, Kate," he would say. "You ain't any fool; you know how t' keep a man at home, don't you?"

He accepted her adoration as one of the pleasant things to which his support of her entitled him. He wasn't exactly ungrateful. He appreciated her good qualities in an indolent fashion at first; then took her care of his comfort more and more for granted, or did not bother himself about it.

But, by and by, down-town there was an occasional laugh when Marcus referred to his wife or made excuses for not joining a party. Then Marcus began to awake to the fact that he was an exceptional husband. He questioned whether Kate valued him as she should. Her watch over his ease showed that she was clever, not unselfish, he told himself. His joke about her schemes to keep him with her ceased to be a joke. He was spoiling her, he decided; she was taking advantage of his good

nature. He meant that she should see that he was aware of this; at least, it would make her esteem him more highly. So he took her to task frequently when she did not promptly anticipate his desires, and was less appreciative of what she did. Next he informed her that he was entirely too much at home, any way. She must teach herself to get along without him. All of which, much to his gratification, had the effect he thought it would.

Kate's affection was alarmed. She redoubled her attentions to his comfort. She convinced him that he had been too amiable, and that he had only to quicken her, now and then, with a complaint or threat to secure fresh consideration. This was a game suited to Marcus's taste; and, for a time, he was satisfied with the diversion it afforded. But, when Kate had lavished on him all that devotion and thoughtfulness could suggest, he began to be surfeited. Her mindfulness annoyed him.

"Go away! Don't worry me with all that truck!" he would tell her when she brought him a cushion for his chair, or tried to put a scarf around his neck of a cold morning. He would follow such rebukes with a laugh, and sometimes would make careless amends with a caress. But, several times he went off in the morning without kissing her, partly from forgetfulness, partly because she irritated him by clinging to him. Presently, he decided that not to kiss her had a good effect. When she reminded

him of the omission he kissed her impatiently, or lightly told her to wait till he came home. He did not know that, on such mornings, she cried after he had gone; if he had known it, it might have made him momentarily repentant. But it would not have made him depart from the course along which he was assuredly drifting, idly at first, then of intention.

He was soon quite sure that Kate needed to be "broken in." He was entitled to a freer rein; he must make a stand or she would restrict his liberty still more. Marcus grew philosophic, reflecting on this. Somehow, it never occurred to Kate that philosophy had any bearing on the situation.

But about this time came the baby, and with it the birth of a great hope in Kate's breast. The baby was a boy; she named it John after her father who, with her mother, long since dead, was but a faint memory, yet one in sharp contrast to her recollection of her aunt—that harsh, illiterate old woman who had been her nominal protector before Marcus carried her off.

The baby was a fat, lusty fellow, and his cries echoed through the house. Marcus was dumfounded by the baby's appearance; when he was told it was the image of himself, he made some pompous predictions for its future as he planned it. But, between its smiling, rosy, crowing moods and the later continuous-variety-performance of lamenta-

tions, cramp-contorted gymnastics and fretful, low-keyed wailing over the woes of cutting teeth, he declared that there should be longer periods of rest. The baby, as a toy that worked, was interesting to him in idle moments; but the baby, not consenting to be a marionette, he soon lost patience with it and, then, his interest in it.

To Kate the baby was a living joy. She was ever occupied in learning the lessons it taught her; in identifying those hundreds of little actions and sounds and expressions for each one of which her heart bade her look and her love supplied a name. Like a flower unfolding itself before her, the baby with every day disclosed to her mother-eyes depths of purity and beauty and promise that were hid to all grosser visions. So, revelling in these, her ecstasy made sweeter by the fears that smote her with every sign of mortal frailty in the baby, she forgot to be troubled by what had hurt her so cruelly before. With her it was always the baby first, Marcus next. And it was often only Marcus, then, to pour into his ears what the baby had whispered to her when they two were alone.

So, insensibly, she fell in with Marcus's desires, and, before she knew it, had let slip from her the chance, if chance there was, to hold him to her. When she realized what a gap lay between their old life and the new, her desperate efforts to bridge the gap earned for her scoffs that wounded her none

the less because Marcus called them "common-sense" not "silly trash."

She fled to the baby's side, and, with its fuzzy head against her cheek, said she was recompensed. But was she? At least, she was content to spend more time alone. She had never had many girl friends; the few such friendships died of inanimation after she married. As for Jimmy she saw him almost not at all.

Jimmy, without forgetting Kate, it is to be confessed, was too busy to ponder on their separation, as, perhaps, he should have done. When he heard of the arrival of the baby he sent a token of his congratulation in the form of a mug. It was a magnificent affair, quite a masterpiece of the silver-smith's art. The salesman had suggested to Jimmy a plain mug with a monogram. Jimmy was derisive. His own ideas were somewhat vague; but the salesman was quick of perception. So the cup was ordered and made—of large size, frosted and a net-work of engraving, Cupids everywhere, a cornucopia of flowers; scrolls unrolling from brim to bottom, and on one of these, "Welcome Little Stranger," and on the other "For John Doran from J. Devlin", and the date. Also, by way of a handle, there was an outstretched dog trying to drink from the cup's edge. The affinity of dogs and boys was very clear to Jimmy's mind. The mug weighed about a pound.

Kate was delighted with the gift. She had misgivings of its immediate usefulness to the baby, but that was beside the point. So she closed the baby's curling, fat fingers on it, and supported it in front of his face. The baby was terror-stricken at the sight of so much shining metal, and the cup was removed and placed in its satin-lined box on the mantel-shelf.

Marcus said "Humph!" when the mug was shown to him; but Kate wrote a begging letter to Jimmy; and Jimmy answered it in person one evening when Marcus was out—an opportunity not hard to find.

Kate, her face radiant, took him into the sitting room on the second floor where she could hear the baby in the communicating room, if he cried.

Jimmy was in high spirits. It gave him a queer little feeling that was partly regret of what might have been, partly rejoicing at being called into Kate's confidence once more, to be sitting alone with her here. A suggestion of reserve tinged her manner; he almost caught an apologetic tone in her greeting which surprised him. Otherwise, she and he might have been the Kate and Jimmy of newspaper days.

By and by, he demanded to see the baby and Kate took him into the next room. But he must be very quiet. Jimmy went on tip-toe to the side of the crib. "He's asleep," whispered Kate.

"No, he ain't," said Jimmy. "He's playin' off; I just saw him wink at me."

Kate laughed softly, and shook her head. But the baby belied her judgment. He blinked several times at Jimmy's face bent over him in the half light, then set his eyes in a round stare.

"I told you so," said Jimmy, and, with cautious finger, tickled the baby's cheeks. "Why, he's a reg'lar little monkey, ain't he?" he remarked.

"Not a bit of it," returned Kate quickly. "And aren't his nose and hair sweet? Look at them!"

"I'm lookin' *for* 'em, as hard as I can," replied Jimmy; "but, I guess he don't wear 'em at night."

"He's got more nose than you have, anyway!" retorted Kate.

"That's so," admitted Jimmy ruefully. "And—he'll—grow," he added trying to say something to placate her. He looked hard at the baby for a moment in silence, then turned to Kate. "What 're you goin' t' do with him—when he grows up?" he asked.

"I don't know—exactly," said Kate, slowly. The future was something she avoided being too sure about.

"Well, I tell you," went on Jimmy, straightening up; "I tell you what I wisht you'd do. I wisht you'd let me have him,—when he's ready t' start in. I don't know but what I could give him a boost. Unless—of course—his—his father—." He did not

finish the sentence, and Kate did not ask what he was going to say.

"Maybe, I will," she answered. "But he's got a good many years with me first."

Back in the sitting room again, Jimmy sat for several minutes without speaking, his eyes traveling over the room and then coming to rest on Kate. She did not understand his look. It was almost wistful, and Jimmy wistful was a stranger. She did not know what to say. And Jimmy, all at once, appeared to realize that he was behaving queerly. She thought she heard him sigh, but that, of course, was a mistake. "A home's a mighty good sort of a place, ain't it?" he said.

"Yes," she admitted, though to say so sounded like mockery to her.

"It's so—kind a—kind a—different from—other places," explained Jimmy.

"How do you mean?" asked Kate.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered, a little embarrassed; and, then, more slowly and earnestly, "Only it's so quiet, and sort a peaceful, and—it's because it's all your own, I guess. Why, do you know? I feel just like I was way off from th' rest of things, and, somehow, I don't want t' move. Ain't that funny? You might think I was losin' my grip on things," he added, attempting a laugh.

"Yes, I'm gettin' on," he soliloquized in such a tone of self-pity that she laughed at him. Then, he

reminded her of something that had happened years before. He asked her if she recalled the day when he squashed a pumpkin pie on "Snapper" Smith's head; and she told him exactly how it came about. Then, she asked him if he knew what had become of "Sneak" Patterson, and that brought to mind some things that seemed to have happened but yesterday. He gave a graphic account of them, in several particulars of which she had to correct him. And so it went on. Once or twice, the reminiscences approached a scene in which Marcus figured, but, at such times, they became disjointed, and the thread of the narrative was taken up further on. These were moments too bright to admit shadows. Together in the cool, darkened room, they raced the streets again and sold papers, or fished and played pirates on the river front.

But, presently, the baby began to cry, and Kate went in and vainly tried to calm it. So she brought it out into the sitting-room—a pink and white morsel, with doubled fists. She walked up and down, crooning to it. But the baby had other views. Its eyes remained wide open; it insisted on joining the circle.

Jimmy who had been looking on with some awe, began to fidget on his chair. Half a dozen times he twisted about and made an articulate sound which, to Kate's ears, resembled "Let" more than anything else. As often, he got no further, and faced

the window. Kate began to regard him in some alarm, and apologized for the baby.

Suddenly, Jimmy got up, and a great resolve was written on his face. He took a step toward Kate. "Say, supposin'—supposin'—Say, let me—hold—it—him—th' baby a minute, won't you?" he blurted out. Now he was crimson, and he laughed nervously. He extended his arms.

Kate instinctively hugged the baby the tighter, watching Jimmy with apprehension. Then, her face softened, and she started toward him. All at once, Jimmy had the baby in his arms.

He held it awkwardly, one arm under its legs, the other circling its body beneath the shoulders. But his clasp was firm, and it seemed the baby knew this. It gave a gurgle of delight and caught at Jimmy's chin. Jimmy's expression was beatific. Slowly his arms were raised until the baby's head rested against his breast.

Kate remained silent; a realization of something missing, something infinitely tender and comforting choked her. Jimmy's figure swam in a mist of tears that she brushed away unseen by him. And Jimmy stood silent, looking on the baby, everything about him forgotten, and thinking—? No one else ever knew what things were in his mind.

So spell-bound were these three that they heard nothing; and, suddenly, Marcus stood in the doorway. He halted there, and his lips curled.

Jimmy started at sight of him, said "Good evening," and gave the baby back to Kate. He turned to look for his hat. Marcus spoke.

"Quite a little family party," he said. "Don't let *me* interrupt y'."

"Not a bit," answered Jimmy cheerily. "You came just in time. That baby's been fooled th' worst kind, and th' little rascal never knew it."

JIMMY walked home that night, for the first time in many months, his mind on anything but politics, again and again wondering that so soft a thing as a baby's head should make that deep, warm hollow in one's breast where still it almost seemed to lie. It was not until he was dressed and out on the street the next morning that this ridiculous impression was gone. Yet any one of those who returned Jimmy's brisk nod as he stepped along—and they often were a dozen to a block—would have laughed at the suggestion that a thought not bearing on the immediate interests of Jimmy in things political could find lodgment in his busy brain.

For now Jimmy gave orders.

With quiet, steady persistence he had forced himself into notice while he yet worked Brady's will; but had said nothing to indicate that he had ambition beyond this until that day when, straight and clear before him, broke the parting of the ways. Then he leaped to the front, and took the path which he had made up his mind to take long before. And this it was, all because Brady was stubborn and

would try to put the curb on Jimmy and would not hearken to Jimmy's advice.

Jimmy had been over one evening to see Sam Showell who held the Tenth Ward under his big fist and wore a diamond in his shirt front as badge of his office. Showell was ten years Jimmy's senior; but, for all, as firm a believer in Jimmy as he was secretly an enemy of Brady. It was partly on this account, partly because there were qualities in Showell for which he had respect that, about this time, Jimmy had many little talks with Showell of which Brady knew not the purport.

It was from one of such consultations that Jimmy was going home on this night, and, when near to his rooms, turned in at Mat Casey's saloon to give a message to Casey. Casey was a little, lean Irishman, with a face creased by the smiles that were always running over it and a tongue as nimble as tongue ever was. He was a particular friend of Jimmy's and as good a district worker as the Twelfth Ward boasted.

In Casey's bar-room, as Jimmy entered, were five men, and one of these Jimmy recognized as "Buck" Conroy, a slinking, cadaverous man who swung a vote of considerable size to which ever side had the biggest pocketbook in an election. Conroy had "sold out" Brady a few days previously, in a minor election. Brady had threatened to visit dire punishment on Conroy's head for this, though Jimmy had

counseled diplomatic methods. Now, Conroy was drinking heavily and talking loudly to two men who stood at the bar with him, one of whom Jimmy identified as a "bruiser" in Brady's train.

Jimmy walked to the end of the bar behind which Casey, in clean, white jacket and artistically waved and plastered hair was standing, and nodded to him. Casey came over to him, his face shining, and they began a whispered conversation.

But suddenly Conroy shouted a curse at one of his companions, and the latter called Conroy a liar. Conroy struck at him, the blow was dodged and returned, and, instantly, a fight was on. Casey leaped the bar, bung-starter in hand, Jimmy started forward to aid him. But neither of them was quick enough.

A man sitting at a table had jumped up at the first sound of dispute, and, with the two men drinking with Conroy, flung himself on the latter. Jimmy was shoved back by another man who also tripped up Casey. From the knot of fighting men came the sound of crashing blows and Conroy's cries for help. Then, the cries ceased, the fight stopped, and the assailants of Conroy rushed out into the street, leaving the bar-room empty except for Jimmy and Casey, and Conroy, lying bloody and unconscious on the floor. Moreover, when the police came in they could learn nothing definite regarding the fight. Jimmy apparently was in the dark; so was Casey.

What these two knew or suspected they kept to themselves for reasons of their own.

But the occurrence had cleared Jimmy's mind of all doubts on one point. He felt no hesitation now in carrying out his own plans. After the police had gone from Casey's he walked straight back to Sam Showell's rooms. There he remained until the sky was whitening in the East. Brady never knew that Jimmy had made this midnight call on Showell; but, that the former had some distinct opinions on an earlier happening of that same evening, he learned within a week—a week, by the way, in which Jimmy had but few hours of rest and not an idle moment while awake.

The assault on Conroy made a mild sensation. Conroy himself seemed to have had all recollection of the affair beaten out of his head, and, for several days, was close to death. But the newspapers that were hostile to Brady declared that the assault had been planned by Brady in revenge for Conroy's "independence." They denounced Brady and "Brady's Bullies."

Brady laughed at the names they called him. He had been the target for many such attacks. He made no effort to disprove the charges they brought against him, though he denied them to the newspaper reporters.

Jimmy took quite another view of the situation. His opinions on political policy had begun to cry-

tallize some time before. After turning over the question in his mind for a week he came out boldly one Friday night.

"Brady," said he; "You've been at this game a good many more years than me but you're makin' a mistake now. Sluggin' 's played out. Don't you think so?"

"Oh, shut up!" retorted Brady. "You make me tired!" It was said good-naturedly; but, somehow, it got on Jimmy's nerves. "No," he answered; "I'm not goin' t' shut up; I 'll have my say out this time. We've got t' come t' an understandin'."

Brady checked a laugh. Jimmy's tone was not to be mistaken. He had had a taste of Jimmy's determination on several occasions. "What's the matter, anyhow?" he asked. "If you're sore about that Conroy business you're wastin' your time. Why, th' thing 's happened lots a times b'fore this, and it 'll blow over this time—as usual. Only Conroy 'll know better than t' sell me out again, if he gets th' chance."

"It ain't about Conroy that I'm worryin'; it's th' whole business."

"What do you mean?"

"Bulldozin' men! Usin' fists, or clubs, or somethin' worse to make men do what you want! I tell you, that sort of thing is played out. Can't you see it? If you can't, I can. What's more, I'm not goin' to run *my* head into a hornet's nest."

“Well, what ’re you goin’ to do about it?” demanded Brady with sarcastic emphasis. Jimmy’s voice had held a threat, and Brady had a temper.

The taunt made Jimmy’s cheeks flush, but he replied coolly, “I’m goin’ to quit this sluggin’ game—and so are you!”

His mandatory tone first surprised, then angered Brady. “Oh, I am, am I?” he said. “Well, I guess not. I ain’t come this far without knowin’ what I’m goin’ to do th’ rest of th’ way. And you ’re makin’ a fool of yourself.”

“Maybe,” said Jimmy quietly. “Maybe.” There was a little pause. Then, from Jimmy: “But I don’t want to go on makin’ a fool of myself, and I don’t want you to, neither.”

“Who says I’m makin’ a fool of myself?” demanded Brady.

“I do!” returned Jimmy, looking him squarely in the eyes.

“You lie!” sprang from Brady’s lips, and he rose from his chair.

Jimmy’s mouth tightened and there was a flash from his eyes. Then, he replied in a level voice, “We ’ll let that pass for th’ present. You *are* makin’ a fool of yourself, and, in five years, you ’ll know it. You can’t club people into doin’ your way always, and, th’ first thing, you’ll slip up, there ’ll be a row, and somebody ’ll go to jail. Even if that don’t happen you ’ll lose your grip, if you keep on doin’

what you've been doin'. Th' fellow that licks in th' prize ring ain't th' one with th' biggest fists, but th' one that knows how to use 'em best. Someone 'll come along and teach you that soon, if you don't take warnin', and look ahead."

"I'd like to see 'em try it," said Brady boastfully, though a little weakened by Jimmy's home truths. Then he remembered that Jimmy had touched on this subject before and always had dropped it when he (Brady) grew impatient. "Say, I've heard all that," he remarked. "And I know what I'm about, sonny. You can't make me think different; so you'd better save your time and tongue." He meant this to be conciliatory, for he liked Jimmy and had a good deal of respect for most of his opinions; but he also made it plain that he was not going to yield.

Jimmy had been studying Brady's face closely; he seemed loath to speak what was in his mind. But, presently, he got to his feet. "All right, Brady," he said, and his voice held more of sorrow than reproach. "I suppose you know what you're doin'. I'm sure I know what *I'm* goin' to do. I don't think your way, and so I'm goin'—to get out!"

"Get out? What do you mean?" said Brady.

"I'm goin' to get out—leave you!"

"Goin' to leave me? Get out of politics?" Brady's amazement was overwhelming.

"I'm goin' to leave you; but I'm *not* goin' out of politics," returned Jimmy. "Not much, I ain't

goin' out of politics. You and I can't travel together any longer, that's all."

Brady was scornful at such presumption. He threw back his head and laughed. "Why!—why! you're nuthin' but a kid!" he cried. "And *you* talk of goin' it alone!"

"That's what I mean to do," returned Jimmy firmly.

Suddenly Brady's surprise flamed into renewed anger. "Get out, then!" he shouted. "Get out, and to hell with you!"

"No,—just 'round th' corner," corrected Jimmy. There was a thin smile on his lips. "What's th' use of havin' hard words between us?" he went on, after an instant. "You've done a lot for me, and I won't forget it." He held out his hand.

Brady in the blaze of his anger, struck at it. Jimmy stepped back. "But I *will* forget that," he said, "for you don't mean it." He walked to the door, said "Good night," and went out.

The thing had come upon Brady so unexpectedly and was over so quickly that it left him stunned.

* * * * *

But Jimmy wasn't stunned. From Brady he went straightway to Showell, his fingers tingling, some strange feeling making him want to shout and tell everyone that he no longer had a boss. He was ashamed of the feeling, but it would not be ban-

ished. So, when he had climbed the steps to Showell's room, he flung open the door and walked in, his face beaming.

The gas was flaring, the room filled with tobacco smoke. In one chair lounged Showell with broad, good-humored face, his coat off, collar wilted, legs on a table.

Opposite to him sat a tall, slender man, a few years older than Jimmy, with keen gray eyes, aquiline nose, and a hard mouth. There was a nicety in his dress and bearing which Jimmy knew was cultivated quite as much for their effect on others as to satisfy his own tastes. For Ed Walsh, leader of the "Twenty-first"—a ward of "gentlemen" voters—was conceded to be the shrewdest of the younger ward politicians—too shrewd to keep company with the reformers among whom he had learned the primary lessons in politics. He was spoken of as a coming man among the "regulars." To-night Walsh was in Showell's room, by appointment, to meet Jimmy. These two—Walsh and Jimmy—had matched wits more than once; they had a wholesome respect for each other. Jimmy had hinted of his intentions to Walsh; Walsh had seen fit to nod his head. To-night he was to tell Jimmy how far the latter might rely upon him when he broke with Brady. For neither Showell nor Walsh knew that the split already had taken place.

But Jimmy left them not long in ignorance. He

sat down, and, calmed by Walsh's cold eyes, related what had passed between Brady and himself. "And I left him sittin' there, lookin' as if th' ceilin' had dropped in on him," he finished, and came to a full stop.

"And now?" said Walsh interrogatively, after a little wait.

Jimmy's eyes inquired of Showell how far Walsh already had committed himself, and got an answer. "And now," he replied: "I'm waitin' to hear what you 're goin' to do."

"Me," rejoined Walsh. "I've got to hear your plans first."

"I've told you I mean to strike out for myself."

"Yes, but that isn't it. How are you going about it? What are you after?"

"Oh, you want to know all that," remarked Jimmy, and his lips twitched. Then he went on, "Walsh, you remind me of a story I heard th' other day. There was an old darkey got religion th' worst kind, and he went to his parson, and told him he was sufferin' from a sin he come mighty near committin' th' night before. 'Brudder Smiles he has a pow'ful fine melon patch nigh ont' a mile from my place,' he said. 'An' las' night, when I wuz comin' by, de moonlight wuz shinin' on dem melons, an' dey jus' look like dey bust, dey wuz dat big an' juicy. By an' by, I felt my foots a gettin' heavier, an' 't done jus' 'pear t' me I'd hab t' sit down ont' Brudder Smiles'

fence. When I sot down one big melon wuz that clost t' me I could a reached down an' a picked it up widout a ha'f tryin'. But I *didn't*! I didn't Pa'son. I didn't, 'case I jus' c'uldn't. Fur I seed Brudder Smiles a snakin' long by de aidge a de woods, an' he had a gun; an' som'thin' b'gin t' say t' me—"Jim Peasy!—yo' Jim Peasy! Yo' done know dem melons don't b'long t' yo'. Get off a dat fence, quick 's yo' kin, an' skin home!" An' dat's what I done, Pa'son.'

"'Yo' done puffectly right. Dat wuz yo' conscience done tol' yo' dat,' said the Parson. 'But dey's one thing yo' ain't done tol' me—is yo' gwine t' stay 'way frum dem melons hyarafter?'

"'Dat's jus' de trouble, Pa'son,' answered th' old darkey. 'I's 'fraid mebbe I can't. De tem'tation 's pow'ful strong, an' I come by dat melon patch mos' ebery night.'

"'An' is—is Brudder Smiles always a snakin' 'round de aidge a de woods—wid dat gun?' asked th' Parson.

"'I 'spect he am,' replied th' old darkey. 'I 'spect he am, Pa'son.'

"The Parson thought a minute after that. Then he said, 'Look hyar, Brudder Peasy! De tem'tation a dem melons wuz suttinly de wuk a de Debbil, an' yo' done jus' right t' come an' tell me. But yo' ain't free frum de sin yet. Yo' got' t' make a riccompense. I tell yo' what yo' do. Yo' ask Brudder Smiles ober t' yo' house t'night, and treat him like he

done mak' yo' a prisint a all dem melons; an' t'morrow yo' come an' tell me how yo' feel.'

"So th' old darkey did what his Parson said, and th' next day he came to th' Parson, and th' Parson asked him how he felt.

" 'I done feel all right,' he answered. 'I done do what yo' tol' me 'bout Brudder Smiles, an' 't sut-tinly druv out de Debbil. But 't done druv out some-thin' else, too; fur I come by Brudder Smiles' place dis mawnin', an' Pa'son, 't am de Gospel truf!—ebery one a dem melons wuz gone—gone while Brudder Smiles wuz at my house las' night.'

"Th' Parson shut his eyes and raised his hands. 'Sing praises fur dat, Brudder Peasy!' he cried. 'Sing praises t' heben! Mysterious am de ways a de Great Ruler! Yo' done come an' tol' me ebery-ting, an' de Lawd—de Lawd he take his own way a r'movin' de tem'tation!'"

Showell shouted, and slapped his thigh. It was a new story to him.

Jimmy was looking straight into Walsh's face. "Brother Peasy ain't in my line, even if th' Parson *is* in yours," he said quietly.

Walsh smiled. "All right," he said. "I understand. We'll call it square. I'm ready with my answer; I wouldn't be here to-night if I wasn't. I'll join Showell, and—back you up."

"Is that honest?" said Jimmy. His glance bored Walsh through.

"It is," replied Walsh, and Jimmy took his hand. "And now 'Brother Peasy,' perhaps, you'll speak out," Walsh added.

Showell, beginning to understand that he had heard a parable, laughed harder than ever. He rallied Walsh on his rebuff. Jimmy, as soon as there was opportunity, began to tell such of his plans as he was ready to tell; and, as these were unfolded, Walsh's admiration of him grew.

When Jimmy left Walsh and Showell that night he had their promised coöperation in his campaign. Their support was to be a secret at first; when he had got a foothold they were to declare themselves.

* * * * *

It was all around ward political circles within a day or so—Jimmy had left the "Old Man." It was significant of the way in which Jimmy already was taken that no one accepted the version which Brady gave of the parting. "I fired him because he wuz gettin' too lippy," he declared.

Jimmy's explanation was comprehensive. "We couldn't get along together, so we shook each other," he stated. Beyond this he would say nothing. But, straightway, he went to work to prove that he was right and Brady wrong in the issue.

Jimmy knew what he was about, and on whom he could depend. In the week previous he had seen a score or more of the most important of the malcon-

tents among Brady's following; and, on the day after he left Brady, he called these men and a few others together.

"Everybody here thinks he knows more than Brady does," he began, addressing them. "That's one of th' reasons you came to this meetin'. Th' question is: Are you able to show him that you know better, if you get th' chance?" He stopped; and muttered affirmatives and jeers at Brady came from the room.

Jimmy's eyes lighted. "Yes," he said; "you can talk big here; but how about makin' good your words? That's another thing. And, yet, I think you can do it. But you've got to take your medicine first. For it won't be easy sailin'. He'll lick us at th' polls like th' devil for a while—there's no gettin' away from that. He's got it in for us. What we want to do is to keep pluggin' away, and not lose a trick. We'll stand in with him at first when he gives us what we want, and when he doesn't, we'll help th' other side, and make him wish we hadn't. But we've got to stick together or he'll make us look like a lot of reformers after an election. And to stick together we've got to have some one to stick to. Now, how do you think I'd do for that job?"

He paused and looked round. There was a general laugh. "Like beeswax!" called one; and Jimmy bowed.

"All right," he resumed. "I see you're goin' to

try and force th' thing on me. So, just to show you how easy I am—sometimes—I'm goin' to accept it."

There he halted as if to draw on all of his forces. The smile disappeared from his countenance, and he took one short step forward as he added in a low, strong voice: "But don't you fool yourself that I don't know what my business is! If anybody does that and tries to get th' best of me, he'll find he's run up against something that'll hurt him. There ain't goin' to be but one boss at th' head of this crowd—as long as I stay in it. You want to remember that! When somebody thinks he ought to help run things—somebody 'll get fired—and it won't be me. I'm boss from start to finish!"

Jimmy was standing at his full height, his head a little thrust forward so that some of those who looked on wondered how it was that they had never noticed before what an ugly, determined mouth and chin he had. But his address struck home; unconsciously they acknowledged him as their master. And Jimmy knew that they did. Jimmy had an abounding confidence in himself always.

But there were disheartening times in store for those who followed him. Only his stubborn will and cheering words carried his men with him during the next year. Brady chuckled to himself, when, at the first of the elections ensuing, Jimmy's faction got practically no recognition. In the next fight they

were fairly smothered and Brady had great sport with those who had warned him to be careful. But Brady on this account was little the less troubled secretly by the fact that, in the face of defeat and, again when overthrown, Jimmy's people stuck by him, and Jimmy remained resolute and energetic. Indeed, Jimmy made no complaint to anyone. He wore a grim smile when chaffed and his courage was unflagging. He fairly lifted his men from spells of despondency by his buoyancy and abiding faith.

The first important municipal election showed, too, that he had won his foothold. Brady got the votes he needed to carry his men through, but for these votes Jimmy got his price. He controlled the votes, and Brady had to negotiate for their transference. The price he paid was a place on the school board of the Ward, and Jimmy took the place. There was no salary attached to the office; but there were perquisites, especially in the matter of influence among those who had the wish to fill municipal contracts. Nor was any one better aware of this than was Brady.

The following year Jimmy's faction was able to make a still stronger bid for recognition at the polls, and got it. That autumn they threatened Brady with the loss of a councilman, and the threats were effective. Early in the following summer Jimmy administered his master stroke. It was a small thing

in itself; it was big in results. Brady gave him the opening, or rather Jimmy took advantage of Brady's neglect.

One morning Jimmy read in the newspapers that United States Senator Corson was in town. He sat for an hour, thinking, then he took up an almanac, and began a careful study of the ballots cast by the Legislature of his state in recent elections for a United States Senator. The forenoon he filled in by reading the editorial comment on a certain phase of politics and the news despatches from various points of the State, but particularly those from the State Capital. During the afternoon he was unusually busy among the men in his ward. At six o'clock that evening these men met him, and an hour's debate ensued. At eight o'clock Jimmy, attired in his best clothes, sent up his card in a sealed envelope to Senator Corson's room in one of the hotels. On the card he had pencilled, "In regard to the next election for a United States Senator in this State. From the Tenth District."

In five minutes came a message that the Senator would see him in a short time. Half an hour later he was asked to come up. He entered the Senator's room with a trepidation to which his face and manner gave the lie direct. He ran a glance around the room as he stepped in, and was relieved to find the Senator alone. It was not the first time that he had seen the Senator, but it was the first time

he had met him. The latter stood by a table, Jimmy's card in his hand.

Senator Corson was of middle height and sparely built. He dressed carelessly and held himself rather awkwardly. His head seemed to be set close to his shoulders, his thick hair, parted on one side, uncovered a high forehead. The skin beginning to bag under his eyes, the deep lines on either side of his nose gave an appearance of premature age to his countenance. But his eyes—when they could be seen fairly—belied the first impression of sleepiness. They were large and prominent; a cast in one of them lent a sinister aspect to the face which a stubby mustache, drooping at the corners, accentuated. He seemed to be perpetually sneering under cover. He raised his eyelids with effort as he lifted his head and said in a piping voice, "Mr. Devlin, what can I do for you?"

"You can let me turn in th' Tenth Legislative District for you."

The Senator's eyelids dropped. "I'm sorry," he said; "but I must ask you to tell me who you are."

"J. Devlin—of th' Twelfth Ward. I am Bill Brady's opponent there. I left him more'n a year ago. I can carry th' District for a Representative to the Legislature that will stand by you in th' next Senatorial election."

"How do you know you can?"

"Th' District is going to be badly split on th'

election of a Representative to the Legislature. I've got just enough men to throw it your way."

"That District has always gone against me. It has been hard and fast for Barnes's man. I see no chance of a change."

"I can prove to you that there's a good chance—this time," returned Jimmy. "If you'll let me, I'll show you right now."

The Senator drew up a chair; he was taking Jimmy's measure—unobserved, as he thought. They sat down. Then Jimmy began to reel off facts and figures. He had the thing down pat; he told the Senator some things of which the latter was not aware, though no one would have suspected that. The Senator leaned back in his chair, presently, and put his finger-tips together. "Now, what makes you think I need you?" he asked sharply.

Jimmy looked the other in the face, unwinking. "Because," he said boldly; "you'll need every vote you can get to go back to Washington next term."

The Senator's mustache lifted at one corner. He was silent for a little while. Then he remarked drily, "You've got plenty of assurance to say that to my face."

"It is th' truth. Your last election was won by two votes—th' election before that by four—th' election before that by six. This time it ought to be—by th' same count—*lost* for th' lack of a vote."

"Politics are not mathematics."

“Aren’t they more uncertain? Besides—well, you know th’ opposition to you this time. Is it any weaker than it was?”

This time the Senator’s mustache did not twitch, his eyes were hidden. He sat unresponsive; to all appearances, unmoved. But abruptly he asked, “What would the Representative from the Tenth District want?”

“*I* want your influence and good word in my fight.”

“In the Twelfth Ward?”

“In th’ Twelfth Ward—just now; later wherever else I may be fightin’—as long as I’m wanted by you.”

“Brady——,” began the Senator, and paused.

“Is already pledged for Barnes—to th’ City administration—against you.” Jimmy understood that he stated a fact well known to the other, but that did not invalidate it.

“You believe that you can defeat Brady on this issue?”

“*I know* I can.”

The Senator got up and walked the length of the room. He jammed his hands into his trouser pockets. He stared out of the window at the twinkling lights of the houses. He walked back to his old position. At the table he came to a sudden halt. “I’ll think it over,” he said. “I’ll let you know in a week.”

"There's no time to be lost," returned Jimmy. He rose and picked up his hat. "As for Brady," he continued; "he stands ready to recognize me in this fight—if I'll do as he thinks I'm going to do. But Barnes—well, I'd rather not vote for Barnes. I'll give him my answer, though, one way or th' other a week from to-day."

"Good night," said the Senator coldly. But his eyelids lifted a trifle and a flash of light seemed to spring from beneath them.

"Good night," Jimmy replied, and he walked out of the room.

Corson went back to Washington at the ensuing election for a United States Senator. But it was what has been called "a verra close shave." And, incidentally, it is to be noted that the name of the Representative to the State Legislature from the Tenth District did *not* appear in the Barnes' column in that election. Brady raged thereat; Jimmy preserved a discreet silence.

But that winter, when they spoke of the Twelfth Ward it was: "What do Brady and Jimmy say?" Moreover, what Jimmy said Brady often agreed to; not because it was to his liking, but because he had more at stake, at this time, than had Jimmy, and because Jimmy held the balance of power in the Ward between Brady and the minority party.

Marcus Doran had heard with delight of the separation of Jimmy and Brady. To him it was the be-

ginning of the end of Jimmy's career. He credited Jimmy with shrewdness and determination; but Brady's power was too well established, he believed, to be impaired by anything that Jimmy might do. He took pains to let Kate know of Jimmy's separation from Brady as soon as he heard of it.

"He's overreached himself this time!" he declared. "Brady 'll smash him, and I'm glad of it. He's gettin' too big-headed."

Kate did not know a great deal of politics, but she did know Jimmy. She smiled and made no reply. A few days later she saw Jimmy.

"Jimmy, Jimmy," she said. "Why didn't you tell me you were in such a bad way?"

"Bad way?" answered Jimmy. "Who said I was in a bad way?"

"Why,—haven't you broken off from Mr. Brady?" asked Kate in mock surprise.

"Yes,—but—" began Jimmy, a little scornful. Then he read the truth on her twitching lips, and was nettled for a moment. Kate always was making a fool of him. "It *is* hard luck," he began again. "But, I guess, I'll pull through. Maybe, Brady 'll forgive me, and lend me a helpin' hand—when he sees how miserable I am."

"Maybe he will," agreed Kate in the same strain.

But Jimmy, looking into her face, detected beneath this banter a firm faith in him and his plans. It was

as a clear light to him. It dissolved his own mask of playful uncertainty. All at once, his eyes flashed. He threw back his head.

“Kate,” he said. “Brady, or no one like him shall stop me! My place is up—on top! That’s where I’m going!”

BOOK
• TWO •



ON one of the down town streets in Jimmy's city, crowded between a tobacco store and a row of offices of second-rate lawyers, stood a two-story brick building with dingy front, dusty window panes and deeply worn steps. A narrow hallway gave entrance to the two rooms on the ground floor.

The first door opened into a bare apartment of moderate size, furnished with a couple of benches, a few chairs, a multitude of spittoons, and many political posters on the walls. This was Jimmy's waiting room. It communicated, at the back, with a smaller room, overlooking a brick-paved court, and supplied with a flat-topped desk, half a dozen straight-backed chairs, a safe in one corner, and a clinging atmosphere of stale tobacco smoke. This was Jimmy's office. "Back" it was called by the fraternity to whom it was most familiar.

"Back" was the place of business more or less directly affecting the welfare of a half million people.

It was now fifteen years since Jimmy made that onward and upward boast to Kate; and Jimmy stood as flesh and blood proof of its undertaking and con-

tinued achievement. To-day, he was one of three men who shaped the course of the dominant political party of the city. To-morrow, it was whispered, the other two of these men must bow to Jimmy, or be broken. Yet, for all these whispers of the wise, the "Three Czars," as they were called, worked shoulder to shoulder, and, when the name of Jimmy was in the air, the names of Sam Showell and Ed Walsh were on the tongue. The triumvirate was supreme. Showell bribed or bullied the voters who had small brains and big fists; Walsh cajoled or convinced those whose hands were soft and who lived in fine houses; Jimmy steered a middle course, and made the control of the primary elections of the party his personal effort. This he did largely through the medium of the Water Trust, which, now a thing of the past, was once a monument of all that high-minded citizens execrated.

The Water Trust was, nominally, a body of ten men whose duty it was to manage the Water Works of the city. But, by easy stages, it had become the Board of Management of an "Asylum for the Incurably Idle" among those with a political "pull." When Jimmy awoke to the possibilities of this establishment he had himself elected a Water Trustee by City Councils, and, in time converted the clerical and artisan forces of the Water Works into a "Bureau for the Propagation of the Political Views of J. Devlin." Through the fifteen hundred em-

ployes his will was worked at the party polls. The threads by which these marionettes were made to move converged from all points of the compass to a common center. "Back," where Jimmy was now sitting, the ends of the threads came together under Jimmy's hand.

It was a plump hand that rested on them—a hand that lacked distinction until it was in action. Then, its fingers opened or closed with a quickness and force that made the marionettes dance. A stranger's first comment on seeing Jimmy was, "Built for work"; a prompt addition to this opinion: "And to make others work."

There was decision in Jimmy's every movement; persuasion or command in every tone of his voice or expression of his face. No taller than he was at nineteen and plain of feature, the years had been his confederates. His face was the obedient servant it had always been. The little darts at the corners of his bright blue eyes, the lines that played about his flexible mouth one moment would be drawn in an expression of serious reflection; the next, perhaps, vanish in the vacancy of innocence or wonderment, and, the next, twitch with the appeal of some passing thought. The dash of gray at his temples, the stouter body and the chin which now boldly proclaimed itself would have misled no one who had known the Jimmy of years gone-by. Even the sober gray suit, the "choker" collar, black bow tie and ex-

panse of spotless shirt front, which Jimmy wore as if they were the parts of a uniform, would only have convinced such an acquaintance that Jimmy was as careful of his personal appearance as ever.

Of very different make and dress was the man who sat opposite Jimmy in this little back room. Tall, big and good looking, with dark hair, swarthy complexion and a selfish mouth, Marcus Doran, at forty years of age advertised in feature and figure the qualities which one had been left to guess at when he was twenty. His clothes sat well on his large frame, but made their color and pattern felt at long range.

Now, tilted back in his chair, one leg thrown over the other, his fingers in the armholes of his vest, he talked to Jimmy in a voice that was meant to be confidential.

"You see, it's this way," he said. "If I get that contract I'm dead certain to fall in for a lot more of th' same sort of business. It 'll be a cinch, if I get it;—and—I know you can give it to me."

"I can, but I won't," replied Jimmy decisively. "I've told you why."

"Oh, come!" Marcus's face assumed an expression of understanding. "I know how that is. But,—well, Walsh's man can do with another contract; and this one is yours to give. Come! let me have it. Won't you,—this time?"

Jimmy was unrelenting. "This time?" he re-

peated. "Why, you've said those same words to me till I'm tired of hearin' 'em. They don't mean anything."

Marcus looked hurt. "This time they do," he remonstrated.

"No, not this time, either," returned Jimmy. "It's always th' same thing. It's Jimmy this and Jimmy that, and never lift a finger for yourself. For ten years or more you've come to me for everything you wanted. You've been given good contracts in plenty and lots of other things besides. You've made money. But where does th' money go? How does Mrs. Doran live and keep that boy of hers in clothes? God knows! What you don't drink up, you blow in on speculation. What you don't lose that way, I'll bet, goes in gambling."

Suddenly, Jimmy brought his fist down on the table with a bang. "And it stops right here, as far as I go!" he finished. "You're not a foot ahead of where you were when we were boys." He glared at Marcus with honest wrath. It was a long speech for Jimmy, and, what was still more rare, it was a moral lecture.

Marcus looked all the surprise and disappointment that he felt. A nasty gleam flashed into his face and was gone. He leaned forward with an appearance of impulse that was well done. "That's just it," he said. "It's because of Kate that I specially want that contract. I'm ashamed of her—of th' way she

has to go round. Whatever I've done, I mean to do better now. Give me this contract, and see if I don't?"

Jimmy's lips were pressed together yet something jerked at their corners. "I've given you my answer," he said shortly. "That's all." He hitched himself forward in his chair, and picked up a letter.

Marcus sat motionless. The fact that Jimmy had refused him point-blank and had no intention of talking more was slowly sinking into his mind. It was hard to believe this after a dozen years of almost continuous assistance. Moreover, he had counted confidently on that allusion to Kate's distress to soften unlooked for harshness. But—Jimmy was deep in his letter. The interview was at an end. Marcus was angry enough to have said anything, but didn't know what to say. He got up slowly and took his hat. He walked to the doorway and halted. But the other never looked up from his letter; with a muttered imprecation, Marcus flung open the door, and passed into the waiting room.

As he passed across the room the nearest of a long row of seated men got up and went into the back room and closed the door. Then Jimmy raised his eyes and laid down his letter.

"How do, Mr. Marshall," he said warmly. "You've come to see about that loan? Well, I guess I can accommodate you. Sit down."

Marshall, a tall, brown-bearded man with deeply

furrowed forehead, sat down. He was a merchant in more than a small way, and Jimmy's greeting made his heart rejoice. To him this loan meant salvation from threatened bankruptcy.

To Jimmy it meant a profitable investment. The aptitude for the management of finances which he had shown in the days of the "News" office had not been a talent wasted.

In a score of years he had accumulated, partly by the process of assimilation, a considerable fortune; and to this he was steadily adding. There are many ways of knowing where a profit may be reaped when one can forecast the employment of the city's millions; there is a legitimate profit in having connections with such industrial concerns as a municipal economy utilizes; last, but not least, there are always men whose gratitude for services rendered in the field of politics takes the form of "inside information" on the stock market's eccentricities, or, perhaps, is represented by stock certificates themselves. Though some may cavil at such transactions, it is difficult to find the law book in which they are specially forbidden, still more difficult to secure the lawyer who can prove them illegal to the satisfaction of an impartial court.

So Jimmy, though he was less widely known as a man of money than as a man of votes, had money and had it all invested, too, where it would do the most good—to J. Devlin. He was President of

the Union Bank, an institution he had taken in hand when it was on the brink of ruin, and made solvent and trusted by hard work and honest business methods. It was the sufficient argument of those who recommended the Bank: "Jimmy stands behind it." It was the same affidavit of worth which enlisted coöperation in the real estate schemes which he started and heavily invested in. But, besides this, he always had funds which he might draw upon for incidental use; and these funds made him many staunch friends among those whom they had carried through crises that otherwise would have given the newspapers a sensation. In politics one never knows positively upon whom one may have to lean next, and Jimmy was nearly always able to provide against such contingencies so far as money was concerned.

Yet, sometimes in that little back room, money was handled in what seemed to be reckless fashion. Things were done there without parade or waste of words. It is an axiom in politics: "Never write what you can speak; never speak what you can nod." But that, perhaps, made what did take place all the more remarkable.

Once in this little back room a railroad company convinced Jimmy that "Silence is golden," and so saw the bill, giving it the right to lay tracks at grade within the city, passed by City Councils. Once the Acme Electric Light Company persuaded Jimmy that the city ought to open certain streets along

which it might string wires; and, merely to assure him of its financial soundness, left \$10,000 of its stock on his desk. Once a council of the Powers there decided to raise the tax valuation of specified properties and so convince the owners of mistakes made at the polls. And once—But there is no need to multiply instances of the magnitude and diversity of the cases which Jimmy settled in “Back.”

His was a place of final appeal as well as of first. His was a bench of strict impartiality, aside from the interests which its occupant represented. All grades and kinds of men, consciously or otherwise, came within the scope of his judgments at one time or another, and felt their weight. Above the doors of the Water Works a satirist had said there should be written:

“Abandon want all ye who enter here!”

Above the portal of the little room in which Jimmy administered justice might have been written with equal force—so some contended:

“Here the wicked bring their plottings,
And Jimmy does the rest.”

Could it have been awe, then, which caused that august personage, Judge Hallowell, to come to a halt in his walk down town, as he saw Jimmy approaching him? Could it have been awe that made him turn, and retrace his steps in Jimmy’s company? If

awe it was, it soon yielded to the geniality of Jimmy's presence. Half a block passed over, and the two were deep in conversation. On the first corner they stopped. One of the Judge's arms was hooked in Jimmy's and Jimmy was telling a story. The Judge, portly, ponderous and gray headed, a prospective candidate for the Supreme bench, was shaking with laughter.

"It was this way," Jimmy was saying. "Th' old lady was as bald as an egg, and her wig—th' dog—he—" The narrative came to a sudden end. Jimmy's eyes were on the other side of the street.

"Excuse me, Judge; I'll tell you th' rest another time," he said hurriedly. With that he darted across the car tracks, and laid a detaining hand on a man there. He drew him to the curb line.

Shock-headed, his broad face streaked with dirt and perspiration, his coat on one bare arm, a red undershirt showing at the neck, "Sandy" McLain, one of the Water Works "gang," grasped Jimmy's outstretched hand in a hairy paw, and grinned.

"Didn't know y' seed me. Th' Judge—!" he exclaimed.

"How's Mrs. McLain?" asked Jimmy.

"Sound as a dollar. She got home yest'day. Thet week at th' sea-shore you gave her—"

Jimmy reddened. He pulled his hand away roughly. "Hold on! That's enough!" he declared.

"I got to go." He clapped the other on the shoulder, wheeled about, and was gone.

Sandy McLain looked after him, shaking his head. "'Twas th' same way he acted 'bout them turkeys an' cranberries Christmas," he muttered. "He's—he's—! I—! Damn 'f I wouldn't jus' do anything fur him!" he finished, hitching up his coat, and moving on.

There were a good many others who would have echoed this sentiment. Ridiculous stories got afloat as to the source of certain mysterious gifts which came to lowly homes about the time they were most needed. One day a newspaper reporter charged Jimmy with doing good deeds under cover, and the latter was tempted for an instant to wear borrowed plumage. Then his hard heart got the best of him, and his selfishness spoke in his reply, "Do you take me for a fool to go slinging my money around that way? I don't work no charity mill!" Which reply, being duly reported, brought upon his head rebukes from those righteous souls who sit in high places. When Jimmy heard of these rebukes he said nothing, but his mouth gave a wry little twist.

Something of that same curious twist was on his lips one evening, two days after his interview with Marcus, as he stood on the street steps of Mr. and Mrs. Marcus Doran's house, and regarded the

building. For five months he had not been in it. Marcus's attitude toward him, his own regard for Kate had made him resist his impulses. But the house front now told him the story of those five months and of many more months. Grown dingier as Marcus spent more of his fortuitous earnings on personal pleasures, it seemed to explain: "No money for rent; no repairs by the landlord. Very glad I'll be when, in two weeks, my tenants are bundled out."

To Jimmy it may have whispered other secrets. At any rate, the twist was gone from his lips, and a rare smile had blossomed on his face when he heard a step inside, and, a moment later, Kate stood in the doorway.

Tall, slender, graceful, the spirit in her fine gray eyes tempered by something that matched the wistful droop of her mouth, a white thread here and there to be spied in her brown hair drawn softly back from her broad brow, she yet seemed to Jimmy to be as he always remembered her. She stood an instant peering into the illy-lighted street before she saw who it was.

Then she started, her eyes grew big and a sob came up into her throat. Afterward, she realized that she should be ashamed of these weaknesses; but they were none the less real at the moment, and she was glad just then that she had a hand on the open door.

Jimmy had a foot on the threshold, his head was cocked to one side. "Hello! Kate," he said.

To her it seemed for an instant that he held a bundle of newspapers under his arm and she the same, and that they had come upon each other at a street corner. Her greeting popped out almost before she knew what she was saying. "Why, hello, Jimmy!" she answered.

He laughed. "Aren't you goin' to invite me in?" he asked.

By way of reply she stepped aside, and he entered. "Well," he remarked, as he followed her into the parlor; "this is bully! I've been turrible busy lately and been out of town a lot."

She knew that he was trying to explain why he had not been to see her for so long a time, and immediately she forgot whatever doubts and disappointments she had had.

"Not goin' to do nuthin' just now, are you?" he queried, as he settled himself in a chair and laid his hat on the floor.

She was lighting the gas, and said, over her shoulder, "No, I guess I can spare you a little while."

"Is Jack about?" he inquired.

"No, but he'll be in before long," she returned.

Then, having done all that suggested itself at the moment, she sat down and, at once began to talk very fast about the first things that came into her mind. She dreaded to approach what she knew, she

must refer to, if he did not introduce the subject. Once this thing was spoken of it would not be so hard. They both knew what it was, and still, she felt that she would be confessing a shameful secret when she spoke of it. Jimmy had never seemed so close and yet so far off as now, seated there opposite to her, his plain, little figure squarely erect, his pose expressing only polite attention, and, withal, a light in his eyes which said, "I know what you're really thinkin' of, and that's why I came here to-night."

Yet, he sat unmoved, and listened with apparent attention, but without a word until, presently, she halted for loss of something more to say. Then, he remarked, quietly, "And, now, as we was sayin', a while ago, Jack's got to go to work right off. What kind of a place do you think 'd fit him best?"

It was done so easily. Not a muscle of Jimmy's face quivered. Indeed, his face and voice alike affirmed that he was unconscious of having carried her and himself over a shaky bridge. Apparently, he had not even noticed the moment's pause in which she drew in her breath sharply and silently blessed him. So, next, she found herself saying, quite as if she was repeating a statement. "Yes, that's so. Jack's go—going to work—right away; but I don't know what he'd better do."

"There's a good many things he might do," said Jimmy. "But some one of them is better than others,

and he wants a good place—one where he gets a fair salary—right off.”

“Yes,” agreed Kate. For some reason she did not look at Jimmy.

“And where he’ll get a chance to do better for himself.”

“Yes.”

“But he hasn’t done anything b’fore?”

“No.”

“That, of course, makes it harder for him. Still, it’s no reason why he shouldn’t do well, if he gets a show.”

“Oh, he’ll soon get work,” replied Kate, and she was glad to say that; for Jimmy seemed to have taken the weighing of Jack’s chances into his hands. “He’s a bright boy,” she added, “and, I’m sure, he’ll soon get a place.”

“So am I,” returned Jimmy. “I wonder if you’re as sure as I am?”

“I don’t know,” Kate returned, looking up quickly and catching Jimmy smiling. “How sure are you?” she asked. All at once, it seemed as if Jack’s chances had become a mere matter of choice, and that she had been foolish to lie awake for weeks, as she had, worrying about the thing.

“How sure am I?” repeated Jimmy. “Why, I’m just as sure as I am that, at ten o’clock to-morrow mornin’, a young man named Jack Doran is comin’ into my office, down-town—you know where

it is—and will say: ‘I’ve come for that place you promised me, eighteen years ago, last July—th’ night you poked your fingers into my face and called me a monkey, and—nearly got struck dead—by some one—for doin’ it.’ *Now*, do you think I’m sure?—surer than you are?”

“You seem pretty sure,” faltered Kate, after a moment. Her eyes were misty despite the smile upon her lips. “How—how did you remember all—that?” she asked.

“By lookin’ at you,” said Jimmy promptly, and showed her what he meant. But when the color crept into her cheeks, his illustration came to a quick end. He began to laugh, though her face was so serious.

Kate looked sharply at him. It was queer that he should laugh just then; it disappointed her a little.

And Jimmy knew that it was queer. But he *had* to laugh; it was the one way to hide from Kate the ridiculous confusion into which that look of hers had thrown him. “Do you know what made me laugh?” he asked, and went on quickly, “I was thinkin’ of how you looked when you used to sell papers,—with short skirts and a pig-tail.”

“No worse than you did in short pants and—skinny legs,” she flashed back.

“I wasn’t sayin’ anything about skinny legs,” remarked Jimmy significantly. “I was talkin’ of

clothes. Do you know you always wear good lookin' ones? You make 'em yourself, don't you?"

"Yes," said Kate, wondering how Jimmy had guessed that.

"I thought you must, b'cause you were such a good sewer when you worked at it—once upon a time," he explained.

Kate laughed. "How do you know I was?" she inquired.

"I—heard it," said Jimmy. "Say, it seems to me," he went on, reflectively; "that now that you 're—you've got th' time,—it might be a good thing to go to sewin' again."

"I thought of that," said Kate, and one would have concluded from her manner that she had given the suggestion only casual attention. "I've about decided to look around for some," she added.

"Oh, have you?" remarked Jimmy. Then, confidently, "Well, you'll get it. But you need to let people know about it. You ought to put up a sign. There's lots of good comes of signs."

"I guess there is, replied Kate. "But—"

"Just what I was goin' to say," interrupted Jimmy. "You need a special kind of sign. No common, old tin one with painted letters, but a shiny brass one. A swell sign, engraved—like th' doctors have. Good dressmakers ought to have good signs. It helps trade—it helps th' house, too. And, that reminds me;—your landlord likes things of that sort."

"My landlord?" repeated Kate, puzzled.

"Yes, he told me th' other day that he'd be willin' to drop th' rent of this house four dollars a month, if he could fill up th' rest of th' row. He said he was almost sure he could do it, if people got to travelin' along this street more to—to get their sewin' done here, I guess he meant."

Kate laughed. It was a clear laugh that came from her heart—the first of its kind for a long time. "Oh, Jimmy!" she cried. "Where did you make all that up?"

Jimmy's face said that its owner felt deeply injured. Kate, looking at him, laughed again. "And the landlord said that?" she exclaimed. Then, her laughter died in a soft, little sigh.

Jimmy defended his veracity with great warmth. "It's all true," he declared. "I don't see how you can laugh at what is so. And what I told you, too! I didn't think you'd do it, Kate. What's more, I haven't told you all. Th' landlord said he'd paint th' house if you'd—start in dressmakin'—th' right way. He told me that. As for th' sign,—I—I've got just th' one you want. Took it off an old house I own. A—a dressmaker left it behind her. If you don't believe that, I'll—bring round th' sign tomorrow."

Kate's eyes rested on Jimmy with a look of such wonderment and tender gratitude that his own challenging glance fell. "Jimmy," she said slowly.

“Jimmy, I want to tell you what I think of you; but—I can’t. But you know—you know,—don’t you?”

“I should think I did,” replied Jimmy. “I’d be a dumb if I didn’t. Ain’t you just told me? You said I didn’t tell th’ truth,—and—you laughed at me. Don’t see how I could make any mistake about that. But—well, I’m going to bring that sign round to you, all th’ same.”

“As stubborn as you always were,” returned Kate. There was something in her voice that made him glad that he was what she said. He hastened to retort, “No more than you always was.”

Instantly, Jimmy was harking back to the days of twenty-five and more years ago, and, presently, he carried Kate with him by recalling to her the time she had “stood off” three boys who had planned to drive her from her newspaper beat. Soon, she and he were deep in reminiscence.

But, before he left that evening, Jimmy said, “Oh, by th’ by, I meant to tell you. Th’ Bank always pays new men th’ first month’s salary in advance. It’s a sort of way they have of—encouragin’ ’em. So you want to see that that young man gives you some of his money when he comes home to-morrow night. Good-by!”

He wheeled about as if afraid that she might ask questions, and was walking briskly up the street before she could find words to reply.

At ten o'clock the next morning Jack presented himself in Jimmy's down-town office. Jimmy was busy at his desk, and bade him sit down. In a minute he looked up, and regarded the boy with a steady, kindly gaze.

Jack was a tall, well-built fellow. He had the dark luxuriant hair of his father; his face had all of his father's regularity of feature, too. But his nostrils were more finely cut than Marcus's, and his mouth was less selfish. Something in the pose of his head reminded Jimmy of his mother; he wondered how much of Kate's spirit and sensitiveness were in the boy. Then, as Jack grew uneasy under his scrutiny and raised his hand and smoothed his hair with spread fingers, Jimmy could have sworn that Marcus sat before him with his coat thrown back from a fancy vest in his favorite attitude. "Cut all over on Marcus's lines," Jimmy said to himself. "But he's got his mother's heart, I'm sure," he added, consolingly.

He smothered his forebodings with this reflection, and ceased to regard Jack with critical glance. He got up, came around the desk, and laid a hand on Jack's shoulder.

"Your mother told you what I wanted to see you about, I suppose?" he said.

"Yes, sir," Jack answered. His face brightened and he spoke with a heartiness that Jimmy liked. "She told me you thought there might be a place



for me in the Union Bank. I'd like very much to have it; I want to go to work."

Jimmy nodded. "That's right," he said. "There's a place there for you, sure enough. You'll be given th' chance to make your way, and a good chance. But—I'll be your friend, of course—but you'll have to make your own way."

"I mean to," returned Jack proudly.

"Good!" said Jimmy. "I like to hear you say that; for everybody has to stand on his own legs with me. And there's somethin' else; can you—keep your word?"

"I don't lie, if that's what you mean."

Jimmy's face, which had been a little stern, softened. "Then you'll get ahead," he replied. "If you lied you wouldn't,—not for a minute. For I want no lame ducks nor liars round me—least of all in th' Bank. Th' Bank 's a sort of hobby of mine. I took it up when it was down, and I gave my word that th' people who put their money in it 'll never lose it—while I'm President. And my word's—my word!" he added. He paused, then said abruptly, "Here's a note. Give it to th' Cashier at th' Bank; he'll understand. Good luck to you!"

He grasped Jack's hand. The boy shook it and tried to speak his thanks. But Jimmy was never good at listening to thanks, and he pushed him gently toward the door. "Go on now," he said. "I'm—busy."

Perchance, it was this same lack of a very common grace that made Jimmy vigorously repudiate Kate's hints that the brass plate with "Dressmaking" on it was not a second-hand one. He brought the plate to her the evening after he saw Jack, and she approved of it highly. But, examine it as closely as she might, she could find no marks on it to indicate that it had seen previous use. She told him as much.

"Oh,—th' woman that had it—was—was terrible easy on her signs," he explained hurriedly, and at once took it from Kate's hands, and insisted on fastening it on the window sill outside, at once.

"It looks tip-top," he acknowledged as they viewed it together. Afterward, he came inside for a few minutes, to tell her about the landlord. He had seen him (the landlord), he said, and the latter was immensely pleased to hear that she was going to "start in dressmakin'."

Kate could not resist a gentle doubt of this, and Jimmy had to explain the landlord's interest in her welfare. Unconsciously, they slipped into talk of other things. It was ten o'clock when Jimmy suddenly realized how long he had been staying. He said good-night, and went at once.

As the door closed behind him he seemed in high spirits, and began whistling, very much out of tune.

It was this whistle which, jarring on the sensitive ears of Marcus Doran as he turned the corner,

half a block away, made him look up the street and, recognizing Jimmy, stop short. Something had flashed into his brain at the sight that caused him to dodge quickly into the mouth of a convenient alleyway, and remain there until Jimmy had passed.

As he watched the stocky little figure go briskly by a light glowed in Marcus's eyes that was not pleasant to see. He made a bow to Jimmy in the darkness and waved an arm.

"Come again! Come often!" he said, half aloud. "You're welcome enough!"

Then, as Jimmy's figure faded from sight, "It's th' very thing. What a fool I was not to think of it! He'd do anything—for *her*. If—only—? But there must be some way."

“**W**HERE did you get your sign?” asked Marcus, when he came in. He found Kate by the window, looking up the street, but he knew that she was unaware that he had seen Jimmy in the darkness. He had waited long enough in the alley to make sure of that.

“Jimmy put it there,” answered Kate slowly. “I’m going to try my hand at dressmaking.”

“Jimmy’s idea, too, eh?”

“Not exactly, but I spoke to him about it.”

“Oh, you did? What for?”

“Because—because he spoke of it to me.”

“What did he do that for?”

Kate paused a moment before replying. She dreaded a scene with Marcus. It was often impossible to tell how he would receive an announcement; he was merciless when aroused. But, this time, her helplessness gave her courage. When she did speak it was almost defiantly. “He suggested it, because he wasn’t blind, I suppose, and had a kind heart—because he saw how the house looked, how Jack looks, how—you look.”

“Me!” exclaimed Marcus. He did not under-

stand what his appearance had to do with this question, but the inference angered him none the less. "Now, that *was* kind of Jimmy," he said. He laughed loudly. "Do you know what I think?" he went on. "I think Jimmy does entirely too much looking around—here. He'd better look more to his own business. He may need to—soon," he added malevolently.

This drew no reply, and he demanded, "What's he come here for, anyhow?" He bent a look on Kate which he meant to be accusing, but her face was turned the other way. "What's he come here for so much?" he repeated. His tone was menacing.

Kate was forced to answer him. She looked at him steadily, almost contemptuously. "Marcus," she said, "do you know what Jimmy has done—for us? Do you know what he has done for Jack?"

"No, and I don't care."

"But you've got to hear. He's given him a place in the Bank."

Marcus made no response, but curled his lip. Kate went on, "He's given him a start—more than you ever did," she added bitterly. "In nineteen years you've done nothing for him, but teach him, by example, whatever he knows that he oughtn't to know. It's a fine record for a father!"

Marcus laughed. "Good enough for him, the lazy lout!" he retorted. "*You* 've done nothing but coddle him."

“I took special care of him because you didn’t.”

“Then keep him, and don’t bother me with him.”

Marcus settled himself in a chair and picked up a newspaper.

Kate made ready to leave the room. Her heart was very sore; it was always this way when Jack was spoken of. Marcus had careless words for the boy, even when he was in the best of humors. To her Jack was a star of hope—sometimes a far-away star, yet the one light which survived fifteen years of steadily-deepening darkness, and still shone to cheer her heart.

Jack, tall, and, she was forced to confess to herself, beginning to take on the sleek appearance of his father, was yet, she persuaded herself, her own in spirit. It was little else than natural that he should be. As a boy his father had given him no attention. Until he went to school he had been hers and hers only. After that, she shared him with his mates, and was jealous of them, every one. Six months before, he had graduated from school, and she had proposed to have him start in at once at earnest work. She had staved off this day so long only because she had ambitions for him, and intended that he should not start with the handicap which the boys of her own generation had had. But, when he was equipped to do his part, and she suggested to Marcus that he help him to make a beginning, Marcus had been indifferent. Then he had made a reference in vague

terms to some place "with a contractor"; and there the thing dropped. For Kate, with Marcus before her eyes, saw only danger in such employment. She dreaded Marcus's tutelage; she was apprehensive of the influences which Marcus might incidentally bring to bear on Jack if they were engaged in the same field.

So when Jimmy brought out that offer of a place in the Bank her heart leaped for joy. Recollection of it almost effaced the resentment which she felt for Marcus for his indifference and his scoffing reference to Jack. His neglect and insulting treatment of herself long since had ceased to excite her to retaliation. She accepted these in silence, though there was always a dull pain in her breast.

Presently, Marcus dropped his paper. "Look here!" he said. "I've been thinking about that dress-making plan of yours, and I've decided I don't want you to go into it."

Kate was surprised into asking, "Why not?" Marcus was not in the habit of giving her plans a moment's notice.

"Because," said Marcus, with a great show of dignity; "because Jimmy was the one that put you up to it."

Kate was truly astonished now. Marcus's assumption of pride was transparent, but his words meant something, and she could not imagine what this was.

"I know what Jimmy can do for us, and what he can't," went on Marcus. "And this is one of the things he can't."

Kate said nothing. It was evident that Marcus had a "piece to say," and, she knew he would say it without prompting from her.

"No, he can't do it," continued Marcus. "He's pretty sharp, but I'm not asleep myself. Did you ever think why he does so many things for you?" he inquired, looking at Kate significantly.

A chill struck at her heart, but she answered bravely, "Yes, because he wants to, because he's an old friend, and because he likes to help me." She remembered now that this was the same question in another form which Marcus had put to her a few minutes earlier.

"That's just it," he said, mockingly. "An old friend, and wants to help you. Do you suppose I believe that? Well, not exactly. Do you think I've forgotten the days when Jimmy used to be runnin' after you? Do you think I've forgotten the things he said about me to you? Not a bit of it. If you hadn't run off with me across the river to old Mayer's, and come back callin' yourself Mrs. Doran, Jimmy 'd never have given up. Mayer's dead now, sure enough; but that old marriage mill of his 'd been shut down on quick enough, if Jimmy could have done it b'fore we got there. I ain't th' fool you think me. Jimmy's 'dead stuck' on you, and

always has been. That's th' reason I ain't goin' to have him prowlin' round here all th' time. If he wants any favors he's got to come to me for 'em. I'm boss here, and I'll tell him so."

Kate hardly heard the last words. Never had she felt such disgust and contempt for Marcus as she did at this moment. Yet her old spirit was not quenched entirely, and she turned on him with flashing eyes. "How dare you say that!" she cried, "How dare you! What has Jimmy done to make you say it? Not a thing! And when has he come here that you did not know it? Never! But you told one truth just now. The day I ran off with you I made the worst mistake I ever can make. I know it; I know it better every day that I live. You coward!"

Marcus raised a sneering face, and, all at once, her courage forsook her. She dropped her arms which she had raised in accusation, and ran from the room and to the back of the house.

Jack was asleep in his room. She looked in, then tip-toed across the floor, and bent over him. She watched him for a moment, her face flooded with tenderness and solicitude; then she pressed a kiss on his forehead. He moved restlessly, but did not awaken. Still a little longer she stood looking down on him in the half light of the room, and breathed a silent prayer which, it may have been, caused her lips to quiver and her fingers to lock themselves

tightly. Then, she softly moved to a sofa in one corner of the room, and lay down. Something came to calm her rebellious thoughts and soothe her pain, and, presently, she was asleep.

Marcus was wide awake for much of that night. But they were not regrets that drove sleep from him. His spirits ran high; his brain was busy. After Kate left he sat for almost an hour, gazing at nothing, thinking very hard. He bit his finger nails and once or twice got up and paced the room. He lighted a cigar, and chewed on it nervously. Whatever it was that made him flog his brain, it was one o'clock before he had decided just what to do. Then he threw away the cigar butt, removed his shoes, and made his way silently to Kate's bedroom door. He listened there, but, hearing no breathing, walked in, lighted the gas and looked at the bed. When he found that Kate was not there, he stood for a few seconds, debating; then he stole to the door of Jack's room. He heard Kate's breathing this time, and saw her form dimly outlined on the sofa. He looked hugely satisfied thereat. He closed the door gently, and went back to her bedroom. The door of that he locked, once he was inside, and pulled down the window blinds. Then he began to hunt.

First, it was Kate's desk that he investigated—a cheap affair of oak which did not appear as if it could hold much that was of marketable value. But Marcus went through the half dozen drawers and the

pigeon holes of the desk as if it were a cabinet of treasures. When his search disclosed nothing that was to his taste he uttered a snort of disgust. He came upon some letters, a fat packet of bills, and some girlish mementoes, among these last a crackling bunch of violets at which he laughed. He crushed the dried flowers in his fingers, honestly thinking they had come from Jimmy. He never knew that, unwittingly, he had destroyed a souvenir of the adoration which he himself once had inspired. He examined everything in the desk without shame; and, at the end, in his chagrin, cleared the top leaf with a blow of his arm. Then, he recollected something, and collected the scattered papers, and replaced them as nearly in their former order as he could.

Afterwards, he stood, his hands deep in his trousers' pockets, his hungry glance roving over the furniture in the room. And the bureau came next under his hand, and Kate's meagre stock of finery strewed the floor. Marcus swore savagely, but restored the articles to their places.

For an hour he kept up his search in this way, and without reward. Finally, he lighted another cigar, and smoked while he lay back in a chair. Gradually, from reflection on his bafflement, was evolved a certain consolation, which, as he thought on it the longer, almost recompensed him for not finding what he wanted.

At the breakfast table he was in quite a different humor from that of the night before. Kate was silent, and would have been wholly oblivious to his change of demeanor if she had known his character any less thoroughly. At first she had not intended to see him that morning; but the sight of Jack, sleeping so peacefully had come before her again and again, and had wrought upon her so that she could view her duty only in the light of his happiness and his welfare. Therefore, she had tried to put Marcus's words of the night before out of her recollection; and she met him at the table with tranquil face. But, though all her thoughts, at first, were elsewhere, she soon found herself listening to what he said, and remembered it long afterwards.

"Jack's gone to th'—Bank, I suppose?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied.

He made no further remark for a little while, then, "I was sort of—sort of ugly about Jimmy—last night," he said. His voice was intended to be propitiatory.

She made no response.

"I've been thinking about what I said," he went on, after another pause; "and, if you want to do that dressmakin', why, I don't care."

Still Kate made no reply.

"Oh, come!" said Marcus. "Don't be sulky about it!"

She opened her lips, then closed them again, and Marcus repeated his advice.

"I'm not sulky," Kate returned. "I heard what you said." She was sorry at once that she had yielded to the temptation to reply.

"You're going to take up th' work then—th' dressmaking, I mean?"

She thought she divined his purpose now. His innate selfishness had got the better of his dislike for Jimmy. Now he was afraid she would not undertake the dressmaking, and that he would so lose a chance to be relieved of some of the expense of providing for her and Jack. The cause of his penitence turned out to be a very petty, sordid one, after all. But, in a way, the discovery reassured her. There was nothing in so familiar a trait as was this to cause her either alarm or shame, for all that it offended her to have him parade such a contemptible quality.

She cut short his further explanation and appeals with the statement, "You needn't worry. I am going to try th' dressmaking."

"I'm glad of it," returned Marcus promptly. "And Jack can stay in th' Bank," he added with an air of magnanimity. "As far as I go, I don't really care, when I come to think it over. I suppose, he ought to be doing somethin'." There he closed the conversation.

Straightway after breakfast, Marcus walked to Jimmy's office. He walked with the confident step of one who has an appointment from which he expects much to his own advantage. Yet, for all that, when he reached the room adjoining Jimmy's office, he took a seat there, and waited. He knew better than to try to see Jimmy when someone else was with the latter. Jimmy had yet to learn of the honor done him by the call; moreover, the formalities of this outer office, while few, were tacitly regarded as inviolable. The rule of numerical precedence was absolute with all who came to see Jimmy. Marcus promised himself to become an exception to this rule in the near future; for the present, however, he abided by it.

And, indeed, this regulation was an excellent one in its way. For by it, in good time and in his turn, every one who came was sure of seeing Jimmy. Jimmy's "receptions" were not exclusive or infrequent. There were few days on which he was not at work by eight o'clock in the morning, and midnight often saw him still at it! If he was not in "Back," he was on the streets, or at some Ward Headquarters, or at the State Capital, or in a hotel room engaged for the occasion. Jimmy laughed to himself at the men in other occupations than his own who complained because of the length of their working days, and who were "too busy" to see a visitor. As for himself he found it difficult to get

time to attend to all that came to his hand to do; yet it was a rare thing for him to be too much occupied to grant an interview.

“A door that’s hard to open keeps out lots besides bad weather,” he used to say.

And certainly, they were of all kinds who came to see him. Marcus now idly surveyed the men who sat with him along two sides of the room on shiny chairs and benches set against the walls. They made such an array as, some would have declared, only City Councils chambers and a Police Magistrate’s office, on a busy day, could have furnished.

Next to Marcus was a stout man with bull neck and puffy eyelids who wore a jetty mustache, and broadcloth and exhaled an atmosphere of hair oil. Shouldering him was an old-young man with ferret face and fan-like ears who wore a coat that was shiny at the elbows, greasy down the front and too short in the sleeves. This person’s glance seemed always dodging something, and his fingers curled in a way that was unpleasant. At the head of the line was a little fellow with graying whiskers and eyes like needles. He called everybody by his first name, and, as everyone knew, had a memory for political incidents that was awkward at times. In the middle of one line was a workman with smutted cheeks who twirled his hat with trembling hands, while his furtive air said as plainly as tongue, “I wish t’ heaven I was out a here!”

Marcus, eyeing this last man, smiled sardonically. "And he'll wish that twice as hard when Jimmy gets through with him," he said to himself.

Marcus made no mistake about Jimmy's ability to deal a blow from the shoulder when punishment was called for. Neither did he misjudge Jimmy's ability and willingness to reward such as it suited his plans to aid. Whichever way it might be—whether those who "saw" Jimmy in "Back" went from there blessing or cursing,—they always knew that the word had been said in their case, and that the thing was as good as done. Jimmy was absolute within his barony.

Musing on this, Marcus became mightily pleased with himself. What a thing it was to have a powerful friend to go to when one needed something! How comforting it was, too, to have that friend in such a position that—! At this point the stout man in broadcloth came out of "Back" laughing, and Marcus walked in.

He closed the door behind him, and took the chair vacated by his predecessor. Jimmy gave him no greeting. His face was a blank, ready to be written on by whatever emotion the needs of the occasion might summon.

"I came in to thank you for what you've done for Kate and Jack," Marcus explained glibly.

Jimmy did not think the lie itself worthy of notice, but he was all alert to the situation which it

seemed to introduce. His suspicions, like so many feelers, probed Marcus's face, but, for once got small satisfaction. He said "Yes," and waited.

"You've done a lot for Kate and Jack and—me," added Marcus. He had got enjoyment from this scene in anticipation; he meant to make the most of it in realization. "And I want to say that I—appreciate it," he continued. "It's mighty kind of you."

"Come, what do you want?" demanded Jimmy. There was plenty of work awaiting him; he was impatient.

"What do I want?" repeated Marcus leisurely. "Why, I want to see if you won't do a little more for—for us. You've got a dressmakin' sign for Kate." He laughed. "And Jack a place in th' Bank. So they're fixed. But here I am. What are you goin' to do for *me*?"

"I've told you that," returned Jimmy, ignoring Marcus's aggravating slowness and insinuating voice. "If you've come down here to try to pull my leg again," he went on in sharp tones; "you're wastin' your time. I'm in a hurry, and you'd better get out; th' sooner th' better."

"Oh! I guess you can give me a little time," said Marcus. He smiled indulgently, then continued with a wave of his hand over his shoulder to indicate those in the adjoining room. "What I've got to say you don't want them to hear, and wouldn't want

to miss yourself. You're such a *friend* of th' Doran family."

He chuckled both at the innuendo which, it seemed to him, was cleverly phrased and at the glint in Jimmy's eyes. It was a new experience to have a joke at Jimmy's expense and to face Jimmy's wrath unafraid. "Yes, you're a friend of th' family—'specially of Kate," he repeated.

The glint in Jimmy's eyes had leaped into flame; his face was a terrible, deadly white. He pushed back his chair. The plump hands were hard fists. He worked his neck loose from the clasp of his collar and took one step. "There's th' door!—Quick!" he said in a clear, dry voice. "If you say that again, I'll——!"

"I don't have to say it again," replied Marcus, more moved than his bold front betrayed. "*You* know what I mean, and I'm not goin' out yet, either!" he concluded.

Jimmy started around the corner of his desk. "Hold on!" cried Marcus. "You don't want a row here—*over this!* You want to keep quiet and hear all that I've got to say."

There was a cool defiance in this warning—an assurance that Jimmy, of all men, would have been the last to misinterpret. He saw that, whatever was in Marcus's mind, it gave him courage. And, when a coward has courage, Jimmy had often said to himself, it's well for the other man to look behind

him. So he stood erect a moment, his blue eyes boring Marcus through and through, his hands clinched. Then, he sat down. Except for a curious intentness in his look no one would have known that he was even watchful of the man in front of him. But, in his heart, was something like murder.

Marcus understood enough of this to make him decide to bring the thing to a head at once. "That contract I spoke to you about th' other day—I want it!" he said.

Jimmy answered him as calmly as if it was a mere business question. "Yes, but you know why I said I couldn't give it to you."

"I know that. I remember why you said you *couldn't* give it to me. But that was the other day. You've changed your mind since then, I think."

"Oh, have I?" returned Jimmy, and then, "Why?"

"Because you—want to give it to me—now. *I'm ready to buy it.*"

"Th' price?" asked Jimmy, after a pause.

"It's this," replied Marcus, and he leaned close, and spoke a few words in an undertone.

Jimmy sprang to his feet. "It's a black-hearted lie!" he cried. His fury was intense.

Marcus jumped back. But the next instant, staring Jimmy in the face, he asked, "Do you want me to prove it? You know how! I'll do it, if you say so!"

“It’s a lie! A lie! You damned coward!” raged Jimmy.

“I’ll give you till to-morrow to take that back,” declared Marcus. “But I want that contract—*then*,” he added menacingly; “or—I’ll prove what I told you.” He turned and walked out of the room.

Jimmy dropped into his chair. “A lie! A lie!” he repeated in a whisper.

THAT afternoon Jimmy was not in his office, and no one could say where he was. The waiting room filled up and emptied itself. Ed Walsh, who called on particular business, failed to find Jimmy where he had said he would be. It was a strange thing; it was not Jimmy's habit to break appointments; stranger still was the fact that he had left no word. Showell, when questioned by some of his subordinates, looked wise, and replied, "Out of town." That was Showell's idea of shrewdness. Secrecy impressed some people and hurt no one. Yet Showell, like Walsh, wondered much what public errand it could be that had called Jimmy away so suddenly that he had neither notified them nor left an explanation where they would find it.

The fact was, the business that had made Jimmy throw up all engagements did not concern Walsh or Showell or any one who was with him or against him in public life. It concerned himself so thoroughly that it made him avoid all notice and even conceal his movements. His face and manner would have astonished his familiars could they have watched him unobserved; and a lot of futile guess-

ing would have followed. In brief, Jimmy looked and behaved as does the ordinary mortal whose heart has been dealt a powerful blow.

Two hours he spent out of town, yet not so many miles away, visiting places which he located after much questioning, and from which he came away disappointed, and with a sharper pain in his breast. Twice he visited public offices, and, by the magic of his name, enlisted the services of every employe therein. But, from all this aid, he gained nothing but a surer sense of his helplessness. Back in his own city again, he hurried down town and into a side street on which were rows of small, brick houses. But, when he halted in front of one of these houses which bore a brass sign, "Dressmaking," it was only to stand a moment irresolute, then to start suddenly on, shaking his head. He came again on this street, a little later, and this time carried his purpose as far as the doorstep of the house. But, with his arm out-stretched to the bell-pull, he changed his mind abruptly, withdrew his hand, glanced at the window, as if afraid he had been seen, turned, and hastened away.

He paused at the first corner for a minute. In that time his face underwent a transformation. When he walked on again, to all outward appearances, he was the Jimmy whom the world knew—sure of himself and of what he should do. If Marcus Doran had followed his movements that afternoon and

had seen this later metamorphosis, he would have been entirely satisfied, or else greatly perturbed.

As it was, Marcus was at Jimmy's office early in the following morning, the prey to misgivings which all of his arguments did not enable him to dismiss. He had a proper respect for Jimmy's craft and power. He knew there were depths in the other's nature; and, though he had never sounded these, they existed to be at once a solace and a danger to their possessor. Accidentally, Marcus had got a glimpse into a chamber in Jimmy's heart, and had turned his discovery to account. But the feelings which he had thus played on, he was aware, would drive Jimmy to desperate measures before he capitulated. It was this understanding which most worried him.

Turn the question as he would, however, he could see but one way in which Jimmy might escape from his predicament—and Jimmy himself was surety that he would do anything before he had recourse to it. So, uneasy in mind, outwardly the personification of bland assurance, Marcus entered Jimmy's office.

The latter was behind his desk, neatly attired, clean shaven and busy as always. Yet he exhibited signs which Marcus did not fail to mark. His eyes were tired, his mouth set a little too tightly, something like a tremble, now and again, seized upon his hand.

He looked up as Marcus entered, and asked him to close the door which Marcus was in the act of doing. Then he said abruptly, "You shall have that contract. I cannot give it to you to-day or to-morrow. I have——some details to arrange first; but you will get it. Does that satisfy you?"

"Yes," returned Marcus; he was eminently satisfied. It was a tribute to the worth of Jimmy's word that even Marcus accepted it as equivalent to the contract, signed and delivered.

"Then," said Jimmy; "I'll be glad if you'll get out of this room—quick! It's too small for us both." He pointed to the door.

Marcus got up, affecting lazy indifference. He felt that he could afford to pass over Jimmy's offensive words and manner just now. "Yes, I'm in a hurry, too," he replied. "Mrs. Doran's waiting for me."

Whatever was in those words, they drove from Jimmy's face every suggestion of exhaustion, and Marcus walked out slowly. He was, perhaps, as proud of himself at this moment as at any time in his life.

For several minutes after Jimmy saw the last of his back he sat erect, his thoughts traveling to a certain mean, little house with a brass sign at its window. It was such a fit of abstraction as it is doubtful if any of those who worked with him had ever seen fall upon him. None the less, it held him

fast. And, again and again that morning, between interviews with those who found him as vigilant and resourceful and quick-spoken as usual, it stole upon him. It brought before him a woman's slim figure, with brown hair threaded with gray brushed softly back; and gray eyes, wistful, yet clear and trusting, and a mouth that was sweet and strong for all its occasional quiver. Always this woman seemed to be looking at him. He never could understand that look, nor could he understand himself at such times. Yet—this woman was the Kate he had known so long—the Kate whom he was sure he never could forget, though she made him wonder many times.

It was from one such day-dream that he roused himself about noon, and walked quickly from the office toward his old stamping ground in the Twelfth Ward. Just short of a gilt sign with "Mat Casey—Fine Liquors" on it, he pulled the bell at a modest side door, and soon was admitted into a narrow hall.

It was Mat Casey who let him in, Mat Casey with his hair slicked down in those inevitable artistic curves, but now without the white jacket which he always wore behind the bar, and with his sleeves rolled up. A strong odor of ham and boiled cabbage came from the door at the end of the hall, and Jimmy rightly guessed when he said, "At dinner, Mat?"

"Yes," answered Casey; "an' won't ye' come in an' swaten th' tay we're drinkin' by y'r prisince?"

"Not this time," returned Jimmy. "But can't th' dinner go for a few minutes?"

"Fur ever 'f y' loike," responded Casey. "Come 'nto th' parlur. Th' ol' woman 's in th' dinin' room," he explained, anticipating Jimmy's query. "I'll jus' shlip back, an' tell her thet th' front av th' house 's no place fur ladies at prisint."

He was gone before Jimmy could check him, but immediately was back again. "We're now alone in a wild disirt," he assured Jimmy. "Aven th' flies 's got cotton sthuffed in their ears."

"Very good," said Jimmy. "And I won't keep you very long. I really came up to see Mrs. Casey as much as you. My business is to tell you that Mrs. Casey 's in need of some new dresses."

Casey's jaw dropped. "Repate that, 'f y' plaze," he stammered presently; and Jimmy repeated it with such success that, this time, after a moment's wait, the little Irishman said, nodding his head,

"That's so, that's so! 'T's mesilf thet's noticed th' same; an' have th' drisses she shall, 'f you but say th' wurrurd."

"I do," said Jimmy. "I want her to have th' dresses, and right off. I know th' dressmaker that will suit her exactly."

"Give me th' address, an' th' next cyar she shall take t' th' place," remarked Casey. He had got into his head but one thing, but that sufficed for him—the Boss wished Mrs. Casey to have new dresses.

"I'll give you th' address," said Jimmy. "But first Mrs. Casey must be told th' kind of dresses to order."

"Who'll tell her? Th' drissmaker?" asked Casey.

"No, I will," returned Jimmy. "Ask Mrs. Casey to step in here a minute, will you?" Jimmy spoke confidently, but his spirit quailed. Talking about woman's dress to Mat was one thing, but conversing on the same subject with Mrs. Casey was quite a different affair.

Casey, presently, fetched Mrs. Casey, who, protesting that she was a sight "unfit fur Misther Divlin t' rist eyes on," entered, rolling down the sleeves from her red arms. Towering six inches above Mat, she filled in the doorway where she stood, bobbing her head, her broad face shining a welcome to "the Boss." Casey stood beside her, apologizing for her appearance, indicating by his masterful clutch on her arm that he allowed of no excuses or delay when Mrs. Casey was in question and Jimmy called.

Jimmy's eyes danced with delight as he encompassed Mrs. Casey's generous proportions with a glance. His greeting came right from his heart.

"Mrs. Casey," he declared; "never have I been so glad of anything as to see how hearty you're looking. And now I won't keep you but a minute; for I know you must have your hands full, watchin' over such a strappin' fellow as Mat here. I only

wanted to tell you where you could find a dress-maker. Mat said you were going to get some new clothes, and I told him I knew just th' one to make them for you."

Mrs. Casey gasped. "May th' saints kape clost t' me skirts!" she exclaimed, "but phwat has come over y', Mat Casey?" Then, seeing Mat's violent wink and realizing that it was "The Boss" who had told her this, she turned on Jimmy. "But, Misther Divilin," she said; "I'm in nade av no drisses at all; an' 't 's Mat 's bin takin' too many 'on th' house' b'hind th' bar, er he'd niver bin tillin' such sthories."

"No," put in Jimmy quickly. "Mat's all right, and so am I. And you're all right, too. Only you haven't heard it all yet. I had—a bet with Mat—on th' election in th' Tenth Ward,—and for a joke, I bet two dresses for you against Mat's box of cigars,—and—and—I lost. So I've come now to pay my bet, and Mat—Mat thought you ought to be told how it was; for I'd told him that you could only get your dresses at a place I had in mind. *Now*, you understand, don't you?"

Mrs. Casey, struggling with her amazement at such an extraordinary bet and detecting in Mat's broad grin that there was something behind all this, shook her head. She looked from one man to the other. On Mat she bestowed a glance which made him tremble and throw an appealing look at Jimmy. But Jimmy seemed to be unaware of any danger;

and, while his face was grave, there was a twinkle in his eyes.

Finally, from awe of Jimmy rather than from any conviction, Mrs. Casey acquiesced in the situation. "But what kind av drisses 're they t' be?" she inquired.

And now blankness fell upon Jimmy's countenance, and he mutely called on Mat for aid. But this time Mat was obdurate, and his wrinkled visage mocked at the other's bewilderment.

Jimmy tried valiantly to rise to the occasion. "Why—! why—!" he stuttered, understanding that this was a critical stage in the proceedings; "Why, —big dresses, of course!—party dresses!"

Mrs. Casey's face evinced increasing interest. She struggled with her scepticism. Jimmy was encouraged. He would have cast a triumphant glance on Mat, if he had dared. He went on boldly, "Yes, they must be—loose—and have lots of lace—and silk and fur—and—feathers—. No, not feathers," he corrected himself; "but they must be—must be—oh, you know what!—*expensive*, I mean." He blurted this last out desperately, but with a sense of having covered the estimate in one word.

Mrs. Casey fell against the door frame. Her impression was that Jimmy had gone crazy and that Mat was humoring him. But Jimmy's face, she realized almost at once, was not that of an idiot, only badly confused. Suddenly, she awoke to the appar-

ent fact that this was all a joke. And, even the presence of "the Boss" did not enable her to repress her indignation at the thought that she had been made the butt of such a jest. She turned on Casey.

"An' 't 's ashamed av y'rsilf y' ought t' be, Mat Casey!" she cried. "T' bring me in here, b'fore Misther Divilin, too, an' make a fool av me loike this. I'll sthand 't no longer, I won't. Misther Divilin 'll have t' be afther gittin' somebody ilse t' till his driss-makin' plans t'." With that she wheeled ponderously, and started to go.

Mat had drawn back in alarm, but Jimmy was quick to interfere. He laid a restraining hand on her arm. "Wait! Wait, Mrs. Casey!" he begged.

His voice was earnest, and Mrs. Casey was impressed. "Wait, a minute," he went on. "I wasn't foolin' you about wantin' you—about Mat wantin' you to get those dresses. It's all right enough, and th' dresses *are* to be expensive. Just as expensive as you can think of. And here's th' address of th' dressmaker." He put a piece of paper into her hand, and stepped back.

Mrs. Casey read what was written on the paper. It conveyed little information to her sorely beset brain, but she accepted it as evidence that this was not all a joke. She looked at Mat sternly, as if she would wrench from him the full meaning of what had happened; but, learning nothing from his still anxious countenance, she turned a quizzical

glance on Jimmy. "An' whin am I t'.go t' this drissmaker?" she asked.

"This afternoon or to-morrow, if you please," said Jimmy. "She doesn't know you're coming, but she'll be all ready, I dare say." He paused, then added emphatically, "But be sure and don't say anything about it being a bet, or mention my name. She might think it was a joke—like you did; and it ain't a joke. I'll give Mat enough money so she can—so you can make a cash deposit on the job. I'll give Mat th' rest of th' money when you find out what th' dresses cost. And don't forget they 're to be expensive. That was part of th' bet, and I always play fair,—don't I Mat?"

Mat vigorously agreed, thankful to be out of what had promised to be trouble for him. He reserved for another time the task of trying to make the connections between the various parts of Jimmy's story.

And now Mrs. Casey radiated joy. Her practical mind had refused at first to allow her to believe in this astounding good luck; but, once she was convinced that it was genuine, her feminine weakness revealed itself.

"May th' divil thet timplted y' t' make that bit soon grow th' wings av a saint?" she declared. "May there be a good mark put agin y'r name fur th' same! Blissed be th' thought that whishpered t' y' t' say 't should be drisses y'd bit! Wait till y' say me! Wait till y' say th' drisses I'll be after

gittin'! Expinsive they 're t' be! An' 't 's th' same they will be! Mat! Mat! whin y' say me in thim, y'll be sayin' that 't wuz me good tashte y' married me fur more thin anything ilse! Now, hivin be praised! but I'll make Mrs. Reilly move out av th' block wid invy av me. Misther Divilin! Misther Divilin! but y're a swate man! An' 't 's no wander, at all, at all, thet 't 's a boss y' be whin y'r heart's in y'r head, and y'r eyes 's on th' ladies! May a gooseberry skhin cover all av y'r woes, an' may y' live t' say y'r childer's childer a rockin' cradles!" And, with that, Mrs. Casey backed out of the room, and Jimmy and Mat exchanged looks.

"Whist! 's 't,—'s 't all sthraight?" asked Casey in a whisper.

"As straight as can be," answered Jimmy.

Casey drew in a tremendous breath. "Saint Pathrick be glorified!" he exclaimed. "Fur 't's not th' thruth I'd be hidin' frum you. 'F shlip there had bin in thet drissmakin' talk, 't 's crape 'd be hangin' at th' dure av me barroom b'fore night."

Jimmy walked out of the house laughing; and, a few blocks further on, turned in at the door of a real estate contractor's office. Exactly what went on in there only the real estate man and Jimmy ever learned, but this much at least one other person soon came to know. The monthly rental of a certain house in a row not far away was reduced by five dollars from that day; while, before evening closed

down, a painter and a paper-hanger had "hurry orders" to visit that same house for specified purposes.

With such weighty business was Jimmy's morning consumed; and early afternoon saw him again in the little back office in his accustomed seat. Once there, it seemed that the spirit of frivolity which obtruded itself on the serious transactions before noon was whisked away from him. He became silent and contemplative, and, for half an hour, sat at his desk alone, drumming on its top with a paper-cutter, and, now and again, looking at his watch with a plain expression of disapproval, while he bit savagely on an unlighted cigar.

He waited for a crisis which he knew was upon him and which he would have given a great deal to avoid.

So, even while he scowled and wrestled with the questions involved, the door opened, and the cause of his discontent entered in the shape of Ed Walsh—Walsh, as tall and slender and well dressed as when, years before, he had stood by Jimmy because it suited his immediate purposes; Walsh, one of the Three Czars; Walsh, whose gold eye-glasses made his eyes seem colder and more calculating than ever; whose muscles had hard work to straighten the hard lines of a supercilious mouth.

Walsh said "Hello!" and Jimmy looked at him. The scowl was gone from Jimmy's face. He was

smiling now. He pushed back his chair from the desk.

“Going up th’ street?” he asked.

“No,” answered Walsh. “I came here to talk to you, and I want you to stay.”

“It’s not important, is it?”

“It is,” responded Walsh. “I tried to find you yesterday afternoon. You had an engagement with me, you may remember?”

“I know,” said Jimmy. “But, th’ fact is, I had some personal business. It wouldn’t be put off. I’m sorry.”

“That’s all right,” replied Walsh. “But, now that I have found you, I must talk with you. My business is personal, too; and it won’t be put off, either.”

Jimmy sat down. His face said that he was all eagerness to hear what the other “Czar” had to say.

Walsh’s eyes were studying him, but failed to detect as much as the quiver of an eyelid. So he took off his coat, wondering if Jimmy was as unconscious of his errand as appearances indicated; and then, suddenly wheeling around, he shot out, “Jimmy, I want to be Sheriff!”

Jimmy lay back in his chair and laughed. “Ed, you really had me guessin’ and worried, too,—for a moment,” he explained.

“Haven’t I made myself clear?” asked Walsh.

"I thought I had. It seems to me you might take it seriously."

"Oh, it's serious enough," answered Jimmy. "But, you see, I thought you meant something right at hand. And you've got—why, you've got five years to work up this Sheriff business."

"Have I?" said Walsh coolly. "Well, I guess not. I've just got time to work into line for th' place. November ain't so far off."

"No-ven-ber!" ejaculated Jimmy. Then he pulled himself up. "Say, Ed, what's th' joke?" His expression was that of overwhelming astonishment, lightened suddenly by a realization that he had taken a jest for fact.

"There's no joke at all," returned Walsh. Then, seeing that the thing had come to a head and that Jimmy sincerely or not, would have him believe this proposition incredible, he drew his chair closer, and added, "I said what I meant. November—this November! I want to be Sheriff."

Jimmy's face instantly was serious. "Ed," he said, "If this ain't a joke, it comes very near it. A pretty bad sort of a joke, too; for, you know as well as I do, that th' place is promised already."

"Yes," replied Walsh. "To Johnson? Well, Johnson has got to go overboard; that's all."

"But you surely don't understand. I've told him he should have th' nomination. And there's another reason. You know what *that* is."

Yes, Walsh knew of that too. There had been a bargain made. The minority party wanted something very much which was within Jimmy's gift. Jimmy was willing to hand it over—for a consideration. Endorsement of Johnson's candidacy was his price. The minority party, whose prospective candidate's claims for the place were hopeless, agreed. It had promised to put Johnson on its ticket, and support him. Walsh realized the weight of the argument advanced by this situation, but was unshaken in his resolve. "Let 'em go ahead and support Johnson," he said. "One opposition candidate is no worse than another in this case. We can elect our man, if we stand together."

"We need their help," protested Jimmy.

"No, we don't."

"And you knew about Johnson from th' start. Oh! come; this *is* a joke?"

Walsh shook his head. "What's the matter, anyway?" he replied. "Can't you understand it's sober earnest? And, as to my saying nothing to you before this—well,—I changed my mind. I want th' nomination, and—I expect you to give it to me. It's owing to me. Now, look here!"

There Walsh entered on a detailed statement of his chances and plans, all of which were perfectly familiar to Jimmy, though he listened to them now as if he heard them for the first time. Walsh urged the need of sacrificing something to the reform ele-

ment. Joseph Gans, Brady's old patron, had revolted some time before from his party, and now was President of the Citizens' League—an aggressive, indefatigable fighter for all his quick temper. The league was growing stronger every day. Johnson was particularly objectionable to the reformers. Therefore, the discarding of Johnson would be a wise move all round, Walsh argued.

"And *you?*" said Jimmy. "*You* are a reformer, Ed?"

"I stand better with the reformers than Johnson ever could," retorted Walsh quickly.

Jimmy admitted as much to himself. He knew that Walsh had always professed to the reformers that his political concessions to Jimmy had been made unwillingly. Whenever Jimmy was for rewarding the faithful allegiance of some worker who was in bad odor with the reformers, it was Walsh, as he was perfectly aware, who took pains to let the reformers know that *he* repudiated all responsibility for the proposed action. But Jimmy said nothing of this to Walsh or to anyone else. There were things which it was wisest to remember in silence until the hour of action was come. He countenanced these workers in lowly places for obvious reasons. Privately he was of the opinion that a little dirt must stick to the fingers of those who labor where soil is plentiful. Nor did he think that this should disqualify them when pay day came.

Johnson's was a case in point. Jimmy's promise was given to Johnson. This fact he pressed upon Walsh's attention again and again. For every claim that Walsh made he had an objection or counter claim in Johnson's behalf. So, for an hour, the argument went on. It was a struggle from which Showell had purposely held himself aloof; it had been in the air for months. And now, as both of these men knew, it must be fought to a conclusion.

But, after a long time, the dispute came back to its starting point. "I want th' place, and *you* can give it to me," was Walsh's statement.

"The nomination, you mean," said Jimmy.

"It's th' same thing," asserted Walsh.

"No, it isn't. We've a fight on our hands. It'll be a toss-up if we can get Johnson in. With *you*—?" Jimmy shook his head.

"With me, it's certain," rejoined Walsh.

Jimmy continued to shake his head. "Look here, Ed," he said suddenly. "I can give you that nomination, but you don't want it. You wouldn't be elected, and—"

Walsh gave a sniff of impatience. "Come! come!" he said.

"You won't be elected," continued Jimmy steadily. "I never lied to you. Won't you believe me?"

"I'll believe nothing—this time. I want that nomination."

"Ed," said Jimmy, "have you forgotten what comes a year from November?"

"My salary—as usual—as Sheriff," retorted Walsh with forced levity.

"We make a President then," returned Jimmy gravely. "And it's to our interest to have the party lines straight and strong in this city at that time."

"Well?"

"Well, we've got to watch close to do it. I was talking to Senator Corson th' other day. He says there's a rumpus brewing up state. I don't freeze to Corson always, as you know; but I think he's right on this. It may be th' state will turn, in th' National convention, on th' vote in this city. It's happened before."

"What of that?"

"Just this. If we should fall down on a big city election in November we'll——"

"You mean on Sheriff? If I'm put up?"

"Yes."

Walsh snapped his fingers. "What's come over you?" he said petulantly. "I'll slip into th' Sheriff's office so easy——"

"That you'll never stop till you've dropped out th' window. I say again, Ed—you won't be elected. Remember what I'm saying right now." There was something in Jimmy's face which should have enlightened Walsh. Jimmy was hopeful that he would

see it. But he did not see it, so set was he on his purpose.

“Rot!” he exclaimed. “Rot! Do I get that nomination or not? It lies with you. Give me th’ nomination, and *I’ll* see to th’ rest. Th’ nomination’s all I ask *you* for.”

Jimmy leaned back in his chair; his eyes were fixed on Walsh. “All right,” he answered. “I’ll tell you what I’ll do—th’ day after to-morrow.”

With that promise Walsh went away half an hour later. And the day but one following he got his answer; and it was a promise that he should have the nomination of the party for the office of Sheriff.

But the last words Jimmy said to him were, “Ed, you won’t be elected, I’m afraid! You don’t want to forget that I said so,—now!”

“**W**HAT, you here again?” Jimmy looked up from his office desk, and choked back the wrath which surged in his breast at the sight of Marcus’s sleek figure. He knew what Marcus had come for. He came only when he had decided on something which he wanted. He applied the screw without regard to the difficulty of procuring what he wanted. He cared not how often he came. He was quite aware of his hold on Jimmy. The experiences of the several months which had elapsed since he made that significant secret announcement to Jimmy had demonstrated this to his satisfaction. Only the habitual laziness which disinclined Marcus to do more than was necessary to provide the money which he spent so lavishly on everyone but Kate and Jack, restrained him from asking for more than he did.

Fortunately for Jimmy the fulfillment of the contracts which Marcus demanded and secured required a certain amount of work on his part; and Marcus was not such a fool as to fail to make a show of doing this work. He knew that not even Jimmy would long have contracts to award, if the con-

tractor to whom he gave them did nothing but accept the pay. There are limits to the patience and pocketbooks of even a well disciplined proletariat. Marcus did just as little as he was compelled to do. When the profits from one of these jobs was gone, he walked into Jimmy's office, and told him he wanted something more.

He did this with such assurance and unconcern that Jimmy had a struggle with himself each time. Nothing about Marcus irritated him as did this careless assumption. His own helplessness only made it the more difficult to swallow. But he was tied, hand and foot, as it were, and he knew it; and Marcus regarded his efforts at self-control with an amused patience which rubbed in the humiliation.

To-day Marcus wanted a contract; and got it, or rather the promise that he should have it. But Jimmy could not smother his choler entirely.

"You want to be careful," he said. "There's such a thing as goin' too far. There's such a thing as blackmail, too! Maybe, you've forgotten that?"

Marcus could not restrain a start. He had not thought of blackmail. Perhaps, Jimmy might be able to fix that on him. And all the trouble which he might bring on Jimmy in retaliation would not clear him (Marcus) before a jury, if brought up on such a charge. His sallow face whitened. For just an instant he cowered before the man whom

he had humbled a score of times that summer. Then, suddenly, he remembered something, and his face cleared, and he threw back his head, and laughed.

“That’s rich!” he said. “I’m not afraid of blackmail. There’s reasons why. *You* wouldn’t want to bring a case of blackmail into court against me; now, would you?”

Jimmy had not fired that shot with any real hope that it would be effective. He knew that, at best, it was a paper bullet which might frighten Marcus for the time being, but would not cripple him. He realized that it had been a foolish thing to do. Marcus’s next words made this plain.

“And don’t you get worked up over these little things you’ve been puttin’ in my way!” he warned. “If you kick too much I’ll get grumpy, and make you hand over something big. I’m awful easy to get along with when you don’t rub me th’ wrong way. But,—well, don’t lose your temper, that’s all!”

He picked up his hat, and said, “Good Morning.” His complacent tone made Jimmy’s blood boil.

Marcus himself was so elated over this latest humiliation of Jimmy that he bragged of it in a vague sort of way to Kate that night. It was especially gratifying to him to do this, because of Kate’s admiration of Jimmy, which, though unspoken, did not escape his attention. But he was too cunning to be tempted into a statement which

should excite her alarm. He was properly apprehensive of any confidence which she might be led into making to Jimmy, if she suspected that he was under compulsion. Marcus believed, with good reason, that, whatever she might know of Jimmy's gifts to him, she attributed these to Jimmy's voluntary sympathy for herself and Jack. And he did all he could in a negative way to encourage her in this belief.

The effect of his disclosure to Jimmy had been to keep Kate and Jimmy apart for several months. His earlier conversation with Kate regarding Jimmy's visits to the house had contributed to the same end. But it was not his idea to have this separation continue. Therefore, while he said nothing more to Kate which should make her draw away from Jimmy, he was shrewd enough not to urge her to see the latter. He allowed time and the friendship of the two to bring them together. When this happened he made no allusion to it. He disarmed Kate's suspicions. She was soon ready to believe that Marcus's aversion to Jimmy had become little more than indifference.

Kate herself had not been so happy since the early years of her married life. Marcus seldom came near her and had little to say when he did. Already she had grown to think of this as a blessing. Her love for him had been so often humbled that her pride refused to be its ally. His

brutally outspoken remarks about Jimmy's feelings toward her had filled in the measure of her disgust. She looked forward to her life with Jack; and because of this, at times, was almost content with what was. She found that it was a good plan not to look back.

She was busy, and she was independent of Marcus as far as money went. That brass sign on the front window had been a charm. Its allurements, apparently, were not to be resisted. First had come the softening of the landlord's heart with regard to the rent of the house, and, next, his remarkable diligence in papering and painting the house anew. Then, came the trade which the brass sign advertised. The van of customers was led by Mrs. Casey. Her mammoth proportions Kate had viewed with dismay, and her presence and speech tried her gravity sorely until she learned that the vanity of Mrs. Casey was all contained in the frankly expressed hope of, "shamin' Mrs. Reilly an' satisfyin' th' criticul tashtes av Misther Casey."

After that Kate laughed with Mrs. Casey, and they became confederates in the double conspiracy. To be sure, she made a desperate and partly successful fight against embodying all of the hues of rainbow and every kind of material and trimmings in the two wonderful dresses. But that was an incident which ended amiably; and, thereafter, their agreement was complete.

Mrs. Casey wanted "color" in her gowns, and she got it. She wanted "expensiveness," and she got that, too. The result was gorgeous. Yet Kate gave a little, wry smile when Mrs. Casey donned the gowns for a final inspection, and, like a peacock, trailed up and down the sitting room, exclaiming: "Oh, my! Oh my! 'T 's this will be th' death av Mrs. Reilly! 'T 's a birrud a Paradishe Oi am, Mrs. Doran! An' thet's no lie, at all, at all!"

Kate cogitated much on the subject of Mrs. Casey. The latter's apparent recklessness in reference to the cost of dresses was, somehow, not in consonance with the other glimpses she got of Mrs. Casey's character, upbringing and present life. Moreover, it was most curious, she realized, that Mrs. Casey should have come to her for her new gowns when there was a multitude of widely known dressmakers. But Mrs. Casey could be uncommunicative when she saw fit; and Kate was left to supply her own explanation in the case of her customer as in the cases of those many other seemingly strange things which followed.

The most she could be absolutely sure of was that Jimmy was a prophet and knew a little about the market for fine sewing. Truly, politics was an all-embracing occupation! She took Jack into her confidence in a general way, yet instinctively refrained from being particular as to causes. That was odd, too, she realized; for, of course, she should have no

secrets of this kind from Jack. Jack, to her, represented all that was brightest in her home, and the proud hours to come as well. She believed that her ideals of Marcus in earlier years would be retrieved in the successes of Jack's manhood.

Jack gave reason for the belief. He was industrious, quick of apprehension, and of good address. At the Bank they thought a great deal of him, as she discovered from the admissions he made when he came home particularly happy. His salary had been increased; already, he was promised an advancement in position. These successes were sweet to Kate; Jack's triumphs seemed quite as much hers as his. They were doubly gratifying when Jimmy told her that Jack had earned his advancement; for, she knew, Jimmy always said what he meant. And, aside from an occasional word of advice or commendation, he declared, that he had given Jack no aid.

"That's th' only safe way," said Jimmy. "A house propped-up is dangerous to everybody near-by."

Jack's manner seemed quite in keeping with this doctrine of independence. He developed a confidence that, to Kate, was an augury of achievement. He was changing so quickly from boy to man that she was reaching out a hand, as it were, to steady his steps long after he told her, "Oh, mother! don't worry about me so. I'm getting along all right. I've

got to learn things for myself. You don't want me to be a molly-coddle."

No, she did not want that, she acknowledged; therefore, she began to train herself to see him go out when he chose without plying him with anxious questions and cautions. Jack was right, she assured herself. He must try his wings unassisted, or he would never be strong. Strength was what she most admired in a man. A new pride in him grew up alongside of the tender love which had sought only to shelter and guide him.

One day in October he announced to her, "Mother, I've got an invitation to make a call to-night with one of the men at the Bank."

"With Mr. Rowell?" asked Kate. Jack talked much of him. Rowell was his senior, and, from all she could learn, was the sort she was glad to have Jack go with. Twice he had come home with Jack. He was of blood quite different from herself, she realized at once. To have him for Jack's companion, therefore, pleased her when she found that he was a gentleman in instincts and manner as well as position.

"Yes, with Rowell," Jack answered. "He's taken a shine to me. To-day he asked me to come with him to meet his cousin. She's——"

If there is a sixth sense it surely has its highest development in a mother's heart. Kate's heart throbbed a message to her now. She could not

translate it literally; it found stumbling expression in her quick interrogation, "So, Mr. Rowell's cousin is a girl?"

"Of course," answered Jack frankly; "why shouldn't she be a girl?" Then that boyish shame of being detected in seeking a girl's company, a shame which soon forgets to blush and stammer and declares itself proudly, made him color and add confusedly, "You see, I've *got* to go with him. He's kept at me and at me to meet his cousin. So, really, I'd better go and be through with it."

The explanation was specious. Kate smiled. "Who is his cousin? What is her name?" she asked.

"Miss Struthers—at least, I think, that's her name. Yes, that was it—Molly Struthers."

"It's a pretty name," said Kate, for lack of something better to say. She had never heard of Miss Struthers before.

"Oh, all girls' names are alike," he remarked with airy scorn.

Kate laughed, but she said nothing more. Nor did she ask him in the morning how he had enjoyed his call. Several times at the breakfast table he opened his lips as if to make a confidence, and closed them as often as he found his mother looking at him.

That night he came out quite abruptly, "Mother, did you ever hear of a man named Chambers—William M. Chambers?"

Kate had a faint recollection of having read the name in the newspapers, but she could not place it. "I've heard of it, I think," she said. "Why?"

"I met him the other night," Jack replied. "He's Vice-President of the Central Railroad, you know. He's a mighty fine man."

"Where did you meet him?"

"Oh, didn't I tell you? At Miss Struthers'. He's her uncle. She's an orphan. She lives with him and her aunt. She's slender and has dark brown, silky hair. She's got a pretty nose. And her eyes are awfully soft, but she always seems to be laughing. It's funny—for a girl," he finished lamely.

"But Mr. Chambers? What about him?"

"Why, I was going to say—he's a big man with a deep voice. He thinks she's about the nicest thing there is. She's lived with him a long time, you see. She is just the same as his daughter—if he had one. She's just out of school. You ought to see the dress she had on the other night. It was—a dandy. She was very nice; I felt as if she was an old friend of mine. She's like a—fellow,—understands all—Oh, you know what I mean, don't you? She isn't a bit like a girl—she—I—" There he broke down. His mother was regarding him with distracting fixity. He suddenly decided that he would be late for some important engagement.

What Kate thought of all this she never told.

But, for half an hour after he had left the room, she sat with hands idle in her lap, trying to learn the lesson with which some mothers never concern themselves, but which it costs most mothers a pang to master.

One evening a couple of weeks later, seeing Jack pass the sitting room door on his way out, she called to him. He came in, a little reluctantly, she thought. But this was fully explained when she saw that he was dressed in his best clothes and wore a new pair of gloves. "Going out for a little while to see—a friend," he hastened to explain.

"He seems to be particular how you dress," she remarked mischievously.

"Y-e-s," he admitted.

"I wish you'd bring Mr. Rowell to call on me. Ask him—when you see him this evening, won't you?" she pursued.

"I—I won't—that is I don't believe, I'll see him this evening."

"Oh, I thought you would see him—at Mr. Chambers'. Well, maybe, Miss Struthers will give him my invitation. Ask her, will you?"

For a moment Jack tried to bluff it out. But his face burned and his mother's eyes were laughing. "Oh—*Mother!*" he exclaimed, and bolted.

Privately, he wondered if all women had as keen vision as his mother. Did Miss Struthers see through him so easily? He was concerned. She had

asked him to call on the occasion of his second visit in Rowell's company; but she had mentioned no time. He had supplied the omission to suit his own desires. First, he inquired of Rowell if he was going to call on his cousin on a particular evening; and, the reply being satisfactory to Jack, the latter made a toilet such, as he confessed to himself, he had never made before. Yet it was with some misgivings that he found himself in the drawing room at Mr. Chambers's house.

But he need have anticipated no discomfort, as he realized when Miss Struthers entered the room. She came forward with outstretched hand and a smile so genial that he felt at ease at once, and his admiration grew.

The description with which Jack had supplied his mother did Miss Struthers an injustice in at least two particulars. One of these was her eyes which were tender and deep for all their mischievous sparkle; the other was her voice which was extremely low and musical. Molly Struthers was a girl who understood enough of her feminine charm not to neglect it. She was quick-witted and a tease. She could have been the belle of her set with a little more art. She was never likely to be all which that name commonly implies because of her frankness when offended and because of the sound yet somewhat uncompromising views of her aunt and uncle.

Mr. Chambers was a college graduate by force of his own industry and sacrifices. He had lifted himself to the responsible position which he held with the Central Railroad by untiring energy through a long term of years and by faithfulness. He was a democrat of democrats in his ideals. His wife was a gentlewoman of quiet tastes and an intense admiration for her husband. They were as one in their love for their niece and in their desire that she should have all which their wealth and unequivocal position in the community could furnish her—within the bounds set by what they regarded as her own welfare and happiness. From her childhood they had taught her to estimate those she met in accordance with the dictates of her heart. As a result, at eighteen Molly was liked by everyone who knew her, and knew not a few persons at whom some of her acquaintances turned up their pretty noses. She was a dainty embodiment of independence with a warm heart and an out-and-out way of speaking, at times, whether in defence, approval or reproof.

It was a knowledge of all this which had encouraged Tom Rowell to introduce Jack Doran. He had hesitated when he first saw Jack's home and the brass sign "Dressmaking." But he liked Jack immensely; and, by and by, he told Molly about him. Molly was not deterred by the brass sign. "He doesn't wear it," she said. "If he's all right and good company, you bring him. I think I shall like him."

Tom was delighted to find that his cousin and his friend promptly set the seal of their approval upon his introduction.

While Jack was removing his gloves on this particular evening Mr. Chambers came in, and shook his visitor's hand cordially. He suggested that they go back into the library where it was "more comfortable." Jack in a minute found himself seated at a log fire.

The room was a square one, hung with heavy curtains, set all around with low oak bookcases, above which were etchings and a few water colors. The surroundings were a revelation to him with their warm, rich colors and their atmosphere of refinement and repose. He buried his feet in a thick rug with a sense of luxurious enjoyment. If he had cherished a hope that he would spend the evening with Molly alone, he was partly reconciled to Mr. Chambers's presence by the latter's hearty interest in all that they talked about and by the many times that Molly turned her bright eyes on him.

Presently, Mr. Chambers said, "You have a man at the head of your bank who is very interesting to me."

"Jimmy?" said Jack, unconsciously lapsing into the name so familiar to him.

Mr. Chambers laughed. "You don't call him that at the Bank, I suppose?"

"No," corrected Jack. "But, you see, *I* know

him very well. He's my mother's best friend and mine, too."

"Is he?" said Molly. "Now, why didn't Tom tell me that; he told me so much about you. He's spoken of—Jimmy, too. But I didn't know that *you* were a Boss?"

"A boss?" repeated Jack; then, detecting her mocking look, "Yes, I'm a Boss. Hadn't you heard that Jimmy always consulted me?"

"About what?" queried Molly.

"About the mail—at the Bank, and about what I want at Christmas time."

"Jimmy must be a pretty good sort of friend," she declared.

"There's not a better friend anywhere. Why he——." He was about to tell some things which Jimmy had done for him; but, remembering that reference to such deeds offended Jimmy, he contented himself with adding, "he never forgets anyone that's straight with him."

"So I've heard," put in Mr. Chambers. "And I admire—some things in him. His sturdy resolution and his self advancement are so thoroughly American. Whatever he is he has made himself."

"He's like you in that, Uncle Will," remarked Molly.

Mr. Chambers smiled. "Many persons wouldn't take that as a compliment," he said. "But I understand what you mean; moreover, I don't altogether

dislike the comparison. I'm sure there's a great deal in Devlin which folks who only vote don't know about."

"Indeed, there is," asserted Jack warmly.

"Tell me a lot about him," commanded Molly.

"What?" inquired Jack.

"Oh—about—politics."

"I don't know much about politics," admitted Jack. "You see, I'm only near Jimmy at the Bank and when he comes to our house. He never speaks about politics in either of those places."

"Why, I thought that Bosses talked about nothing else."

"Perhaps that's because we only know them by what we read of them in the newspapers and by what they make us do at the polls," suggested Mr. Chambers. "But, I believe, that there is a side to them which we don't see."

"If you could see Jimmy when he's at our house, you'd be sure of it," declared Jack. "And I guess he isn't so different outside with anyone who is fair to him."

"Just so," assented Mr. Chambers. "He's fair to all who are fair to him, eh? Yet, I suppose, there are many who think they deserve more than they get from him?"

"Maybe," answered Jack. Then his loyalty to Jimmy pricked by this admission he went on, "But anyway, he keeps his word, and he has the kindest

heart there ever was. I've known him—ever since I was a baby—and he's always been doing something for me. People who abuse him don't know him, that's all."

"I don't believe they do," agreed Molly. "Jimmy must be fun. I'm going to know him some day." Her cheeks glowed. Her liking for Jack was deepened. His earnest, ringing voice and quick defence of his friend were much after her own manner.

Mr. Chambers had watched the boy's eyes kindle and listened with approval to his outspoken championship of his benefactor. These were signs of qualities which matched his own ideas of what a friendship should be. "I know, of course, what Devlin looks like," he said. "But I have never come in contact with him. Much of what I know of him has come through a friend of mine,—Mr. Gans. I would like to meet him."

"Would you?" said Jack. "I'll introduce you. Would *you* like to know him?" he asked, turning to Molly.

"Yes, I should. But, dear me! I should be dreadfully afraid. A real Boss!"

Jack laughed. "Afraid!" he cried. "You wouldn't be afraid when he talked to you."

"Well, you must first introduce me to your friend," interposed Mr. Chambers.

"When?" questioned Jack eagerly. "Tomorrow?"

"No, not to-morrow; but some time soon, if you will."

"Oh, I'll do it," answered Jack.

"I tell you what I wish you'd do for me," said Molly. "I wish you'd get me his autograph for my collection. I've got the names of a good many famous people, but I haven't got a Boss."

"Of course, I'll get it. 'J. Devlin—Boss'?"

"Yes; and, after that,—'Jimmy'—just as if we were old friends, as you and he are."

"All right, I'll get it to-morrow. No, I forgot, he won't be in town to-morrow. He's going to Washington for a week with Senator Corson. But, as soon as he comes back, I'll—I'll *bring* it to you," he finished with an air of solving the last difficulty. "May I?" he added, surprised that she did not promptly embrace this unique proposition.

"I don't know whether I'll be home," she returned calmly. Then quickly, "But you can give it to Uncle Will for me. You'll take good care of it for me, won't you, Uncle Will?"

"I shall try," replied Mr. Chambers with intense gravity.

"All—right," assented Jack.

Then Mrs. Chambers came in. She had a low, sweet voice; and Jack, who had met her on his previous visits, liked her. They made a little circle about the fire, and talked for half an hour. Nine o'clock struck, and Jack's hopes of seeing Molly

alone revived, only to dwindle as the two superfluous members of the party kept their seats. He felt that it was essential that a better arrangement should be made about the delivery of that autograph. When Mrs. Chambers got up with the remark that she had some letters to write, and, five minutes later, Mr. Chambers was called away by a visitor, Jack's heart leaped. The clock hands still gave him half an hour.

But the ten minutes which followed were a self revelation of stupidity. With all his eagerness to appear at ease and to engage Molly's attention, he found his tongue tied and his hands dreadfully in the way. Molly, on the contrary, rattled on at a great rate. She told him about a book she had been reading. She talked about Tom Rowell, and spoke of him in a way which made Jack realize, for the first time, that Rowell had his limitations. She asked him if he knew a man named Gans.

"I know an old man named Gans. He comes into the Bank once in a while."

"How old?" queried Molly.

"About fifty, I guess."

"Oh, dear me! that isn't Dick." She laughed.

"Dick! An ugly name," reflected Jack. "Isn't it?" he said aloud.

"No. That must be Dick's Uncle Joe—father's friend. Dick's twenty-four. You ought to know him."

"Why?"

"He's such a jolly fellow. He's good looking, too."

"His uncle isn't," said Jack promptly.

"He's very different looking from his uncle."

"Is he?"

"Yes."

There was a pause. Jack made a desperate rally. "When can I call again?" he asked.

"Why,—any time. Uncle likes you, and, I know, *he* 'll be glad to talk with you some more about your friend, Mr. Devlin."

"But *you*?"

"Oh, I'm interested in Mr. Devlin, too. Haven't I asked for his autograph? I must tell Dick about him. Couldn't we arrange to have Dick here when—whenever I meet Mr. Devlin?"

"I don't think so!" said Jack so sharply that she gave a little jump.

"My gracious!" she exclaimed. "So Mr. Devlin knows Dick, and doesn't like him?"

He frowned. "I don't think they know each other," he said. "But, I'm sure he wouldn't want to meet—a crowd. That is"—realizing that this savored of rudeness,—“I mean, I think, it would be better if there wasn't any stranger about when I introduce Jimmy to you."

"But Dick isn't a stranger. He's known us a *long* time."

"Known *you* a long time?" asked Jack, helping to turn the knife in his wound.

"Oh, yes, he knows *me* very well."

"How well?"

"I wouldn't dare say. You might ask him."

"I won't do it!" declared Jack.

"What was I thinking of? Of course, you wouldn't. Dick wouldn't like it."

"Why wouldn't he?"

"Oh,—I don't know."

"Would *you* care?"

"Why should I care?"

"Then you don't care?"

"About what?"

"Dick?—That is if I asked him?"

She laughed. "How silly you are! I was only fooling."

"Only fooling! About how well you knew—Dick—Mr. Gans, I mean?"

"No, about asking him. Of course he wouldn't say how well he knew me—to you. But *I'll* tell you. I know Dick as well—Let me see? As well as——"

"Me?"

"Oh, *lots* better than that," she scoffed. "Why, Mr. Doran, I've just met you."

"You met me two weeks and two days ago."

"So long ago as that? But, of course, I remember now. It was the night that Tom Rowell was

here—one of the nights. Do you know, I can always remember anything that happens when Tom's around? He's such a quiet fellow; he makes me think."

"Does he?" gloomily.

"Yes——"

"But how well"—Jack hastened to interpolate when she resumed suddenly, "I think a lot about Tom. He's my cousin and, of course, I ought to."

Jack assented grudgingly. He wasn't sure that cousins should be so much in each other's thoughts.

"But dear old Tom isn't a bit like a cousin—in some ways," she mused.

"Tom" was growing more intolerable than "Dick." Jack said firmly, "You were going to tell me how well you knew Mr. Gans?" He looked so solemn when he made this suggestion that she laughed.

"Why, what's the matter?" she exclaimed.

"You"—Jack began blunderingly. He did not know just what he was to say. She struck in briskly, "Yes, I *have* been talking a great deal about——" She paused; Jack leaned forward eagerly. "About two of my particular friends," she finished composedly.

"Do you talk about your other friends to them—to Mr. Gans and—Tom?" he managed to say.

"Why, yes,—sometimes."

"And *I'm* one of your friends?"

“Of course,—that is, you are my friend, aren’t you?” She looked at him with wide-open eyes. But there was something which popped in and out about the corners of her mouth which puzzled Jack. At any other time it would have been a dimple which he would have remembered as one of the many adorable possessions of The Only Girl. At this moment he was not sure that it was not a mocking sign, and that it played at hide-and-seek in contempt of his misery. Abruptly he burst out, “I guess, I’m not anybody’s friend.”

Instantly Molly’s face grew serious. Her eyes were penitent; the dimple was effaced by a sorrowful little line which drew at her mouth. “Don’t say that,” she chided softly. “You are a friend of lots of people. And you have lots of friends. I’m—I’m one of them.”

Just then the embers of the fire must have flared up and shed a great light over the room; for, in that instant, everything about him became exceedingly bright and cheerful to Jack’s gaze. A radiant figure of a slim girl in a dress of gray crepe, her lustrous, brown hair in thick braids, crowning her tender face and softly shining eyes filled in the vision. “I hoped you were my friend,” he stammered in bewildered delight.

And with that the face of the radiant creature became dangerously demure once more. “Oh!” she cried; “I forgot to show you my California

views." She got a big portfolio from beneath the broad oak table, and invited him to draw up a chair by her own.

Just as Jack discovered that this particular California tour "personally conducted" was to be a journey of enchantments Mr. Chambers reëntered the room, and, at Molly's suggestion, took the portfolio on his knees, and began to explain the views. He had much to tell and a fine, rich voice; but it was plain to Jack from the start that the delights of California were, after all, not what he had anticipated.

Then the clock on the mantel beat off ten musical strokes, and the cathedral gong in the hallway took up the echo lest Jack might have grown suddenly hard of hearing. There was no neglecting the warning. His good sense told him he should leave.

He got up. "I must go," he said. "Good night, Mr. Chambers! Good night, Miss Struthers!"

Mr. Chambers shook hands with him, and followed him to the door. Out of the tail of his eye Jack saw Molly standing by the fireplace. He grew bold at the situation thrust upon him. "Please don't forget, Miss Struthers," he said, turning swiftly in the doorway; "I will come next Wednesday evening to bring you Mr. Devlin's autograph."

Molly turned. He was not certain whether it was the flickering shadow from the flames or a smile which danced across her face as she answered, "Oh, but *you* forgot. I am going to a party with—Dick,

on Wednesday evening." Then, as Jack's heart sank, "But it was Thursday evening, anyhow, that you were coming, wasn't it?"

In his room that evening Jack wondered what it was he had said which made Mr. Chambers laugh so immoderately as they parted on the doorstep.

“JIMMY,” said Jack on Wednesday evening of the following week; “will you write your name on a piece of paper for me?”

Kate was busy in the kitchen when Jimmy arrived; Jack intended to make good use of the opportunity of speaking to Jimmy alone. At the Bank there were few spare moments.

Jimmy looked up quickly. “My name?” he repeated, wrinkling his brows. “What do you want it for?”

“I’d like to have it for an autograph collection,” replied Jack.

“Sort of Rogues’ Gallery of names, eh?”

“No, a collection of celebrated people. There’s lots of big names in it.”

“Let’s see it.”

“It—it isn’t here.”

“Can’t put my name into anything till I see what sort of company it’s goin’ to keep. You show it to me; then, maybe, I’ll find somebody good enough to sit next to in th’ book.”

“I’m afraid I can’t. The collection belongs to a friend.”

"Oh!" There was meaning in the utterance. Jimmy had written "J. Devlin" many times on Bank paper; he had a prejudice against putting it on any other document. Jack knew this. So he explained, after a brief hesitation, "This friend of mine has heard a lot about you, she said. And she asked for your name for her collection."

"It's funny your mother didn't ask for it herself," remarked Jimmy.

Jack's stare of astonishment was too much for self-restraint. A twinkle surprised Jimmy's gravity. Jack comprehended. "You knew it wasn't for my mother," he said. "It's for a—girl."

"Oh!" said Jimmy. A look of understanding passed between them. Somehow, Jack found it easier to be discovered by Jimmy than by his mother. Perhaps, his weakness had grown more shameless. At any rate, he repeated, "Yes, it's for a friend of mine—Miss Struthers."

"An old friend?"

"Yes, I met her a month ago. She's a niece of Mr. William H. Chambers, the Vice-President of the Central Railroad. She's a bully girl, and she wants to meet you. You'd like her, I know. She's interested in politics. She has everything but a Boss; and, she says, she wants him more than anything else."

"Whew!" whistled Jimmy. "I'll look out for myself. Where do you think I'd better hide?"

"Hide?" Then Jack's face cleared, and he laughed. "I guess, you won't have to hide. All you've got to do is to write your name for her, and give it to me."

Jimmy exhaled a long breath. "Jerusalem! You had me guessing. Thought I was goin' to be snatched up on th' street, first time she came across me. Oh, yes, I'll write my name, if that'll satisfy her."

Jack got paper, pen and ink. Jimmy sat down at a table. He poised the pen, then remarked, "On second thoughts, I guess, I'll write a letter to her."

"A letter would be fine."

"Well, you go over there, then. I can't write with anyone looking over my shoulder."

Jack sat down in a corner. Jimmy wrote slowly for a couple of minutes. Then he held the paper over the lamp, and waved it to and fro.

"Let's see?" asked Jack, coming forward.

"Not a bit of it," answered Jimmy, calmly folding the sheet. "It's a personal letter to—Miss Struthers, and—private."

The conceit tickled Jack's fancy. "All right," he said. "Here's an envelope."

Jimmy enclosed the letter, and sealed the envelope. "What's th' address?" he inquired.

"Just put on her name. I'll take it to her."

"No, siree! You might open it. I mail my letters."

"I won't open it. I'll put it right into her hands."

"Straight?"

"Yes."

"How soon?"

"To-morrow night."

"I guess I'll have to give it to you, then."

Jimmy wrote "Miss Struthers" in a cramped hand across the envelope, and gave it to Jack.

Mr. and Mrs. Chambers had guests in the drawing room when Jack called the following evening, and he rejoiced to find himself in his favorite nook beside the fire-place alone with Molly. Presently, he introduced the subject of his promise at the time of his last visit. He produced Jimmy's letter.

"For me?" asked Molly. "How jolly! Do you know what's in it?"

"Read it," he replied, with importance. She broke the seal, and ran her eye over the paper. She gave him a fleeting glance. He did not understand it.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he inquired.

"I think—that—Jimmy is a very good friend of mine."

"He couldn't be anything else."

She did not seem to be impressed by the implication. "And you said he always told the truth, didn't you?" she asked.

"Yes, I'm sure he does. You can believe whatever he says."

She folded the letter neatly, and began to put it

into the envelope. "I must say I think it's unselfish of you to admit that," she remarked.

Jack became vaguely uneasy. "Why so?"

"Because you brought me this letter in person."

His bewilderment grew. "It was just like Jimmy to write it," he hazarded.

She was slipping the letter back and forth; suddenly she held it out to him. "It was very kind on his part," she said soberly. "I shall thank him for it myself. But, of course, I don't want the letter; and, I suppose, you'll excuse me, under the circumstances, if I say good night?"

"Good night?" he stammered. What had happened? "Why I've just come? What's the matter?"

"Nothing," coolly. "Only I'm sure there are *other* girls who would appreciate Mr. Devlin's autograph more than I could—under the circumstances." Jack was dumbfounded. "Here's the letter. Please, take it," she prompted.

He took it mechanically. "I don't know what I've done," he blurted out.

"Nothing, Mr. Doran. As I say, you were really very good to bring the letter, knowing as you did, what was in it."

"But I don't."

"But you'd read it?"

"I haven't read it," he replied energetically.

"Why, you let me think you had when I asked you!"

Jack reddened. "Maybe I did; but I hadn't read the letter all the same. Jimmy wouldn't let me."

Molly's lips twitched. "I don't wonder he wouldn't," she remarked severely. "But, perhaps, you'd better read it now. It might—it might make you less generous in offering to get autographs from your friend, Mr. Devlin."

Jack snatched the letter from its covering. He read it hastily. He did not see her cover her face with her hands; nor did he hear the trickle of laughter which escaped through her fingers. His faculties were intent on a treacherous epistle. Jimmy's letter was as follows:

"MISS STRUTHERS,

"Dear Madam:

"Our friend, Mr. Jack Doran says you are a bully girl, but that you want a boss. You mustn't believe all that he tells you. I don't. This offering to get an autograph is an old dodge of his. I've written my name ten times for him—for friends of his. He says they're bully girls, but that they all need a boss. Maybe, they do; but you don't, I'm sure. So you watch out for Jack Doran. He's a sly one.

"Yours truly

"J. DEVLIN—JIMMY."

Jack looked up; his face was scarlet. "That isn't so—not a word of it!" he exploded. "It was a low down trick!" Then he saw that Molly's eyes peeped from their ambush, laughing, and he waxed wroth.

He knew that he had been made to look like a fool, whatever other injury he might have escaped. "I'll tell him—I'll tell Jimmy"—he began.

"You'll tell him he's a good friend of mine," she supplied. "You'll tell him just that, if you don't want me to tell the truth to those ten other girls who asked for an autograph."

"But there aren't any other girls."

Molly's nose was tilted.

"There isn't one."

Molly's eyes were scornful. "No, really there isn't one," he urged.

"Not *one*?" she queried softly.

"That is—oh, of course, there's *one*," he hastened to correct.

"You're sure?"

"Dead sure."

"Then suppose you give her the autograph that belongs to her."

Jack extended the letter. "Why, I know her, do I?" she exclaimed, and added quickly, "Well, I'll keep it anyway, for the present." She tucked away the letter. Then her face brightened. "Oh, I nearly forgot to tell you something. Dick—Dick Gans is coming here this evening."

She paid no attention to Jack's darkened face. "Yes, and I'm particularly glad he's coming *this* evening."

"Are you?" said Jack gloomily.

“Yes, because I want him to meet you.”

This had a better sound. “Does he want to meet me?” Jack inquired. He could not understand why any man who knew Molly should wish to meet another man of her acquaintance.

“He said,” she answered sweetly; “that he believed you and he would be good friends. I’m glad of that. You know, Dick doesn’t like some of the men I know.”

“Don’t he.” Jack wasn’t certain whether this last confidence held good or evil. “Perhaps, we’ll be friends,” he conceded ungraciously. “But why doesn’t he like—the—others?”

“He does like *some* of them. Harry Jenks and Corlies Porter and he get along splendidly together. But I don’t know just why that is; for *I* never cared much for Mr. Porter or Mr. Jenks, and I see very little of them. Do you know them?”

“No, I don’t,” returned Jack abstractedly. Then, “Who is it that Mr. Gans doesn’t like?”

“Let’s see. Tom Rowell is one, and—well, Tom is the only one I can think of, right off.”

“I don’t think I’ll like Mr. Gans,” said Jack decidedly.

“Why?” She looked disappointed and surprised. Then, suddenly, “Oh, I see! You think you won’t like him because Tom and you are such friends.”

Jack made no comment. “Aren’t you great friends?” she asked.

"Yes,——pretty good friends."

"I don't wonder. Tom is an awfully nice fellow. Do you know"—leaning forward confidentially,—
"I never can tell which I like best—Dick or Tom."

Jack groaned inwardly. It seemed that there was no escape from this inquisition. He was blindly groping for a loophole when the curtains in the doorway were parted, and some one said, "Good evening, Molly."

Jack decided that never before had he heard so unpleasant a voice. It was intolerably familiar, too. But he rose and waited with the patience of a Tantalus while Molly shook hands with the newcomer.

He was tall and blonde with the beginnings of a mustache. He twirled this last—or tried to, as Jack observed—as he spoke to Molly. His back was partly turned on Jack. Nothing could be more homely than his profile, the latter thought. Molly seemed to find something in the new comer's face which pleased her. She said something to him which Jack could not hear. An unintelligible muttering came from under that absurd mustache. Its wearer turned. Jack instantly saw that his first opinion of the profile was false. The full face was homely beyond comparison. He fancied that there was a patronizing smile on the lips. That made him mad.

"This is Mr. Gans, Mr. Doran," said Molly prettily. She gave Jack a glance that made his

pulses leap, and flashed its mate upon the other man.

Jack bowed stiffly.

“Very glad to meet you,” said Dick Gans in a tone that made Jack determine to find an excuse to lick him the first time they met alone. Aloud he replied, “I’m glad to know you.”

Then they sat down,—Jack in his former place, Dick in a chair which he adroitly slipped in between the latter’s and Molly’s chairs. Jack found himself looking at Molly’s hands and the lower part of her gown. Dick’s bulky figure blotted out the rest. For this reason he hitched his chair closer to the fireplace, and was rewarded by a larger share of Molly and a clearer view of the only portion of Dick’s face in which he was interested. He did not discover until he reached home that night that the nap on one side of his coat and trousers was singed. This was one of the mementos of a miserable evening.

Others repeated themselves to him in the form of remarks made by Molly to Dick and by Dick to Molly—remarks at which they both laughed and at one of which she colored bewitchingly. Molly was at pains to explain these remarks to Jack, assisted by frequent references to Dick, who, the while, complacently stroked his upper lip, smiling indulgently and interjecting a word, now and then, which was senseless to Jack, but apparently fraught with delicious reminiscences to her.



Jack was so miserable that, when half past nine struck, he mistook it for half past ten; and, with a sense of virtuous resignation, got on his feet, and said he must go.

Dick got up lazily, as if he didn't care. "Why, we are having such a good time," he drawled. "But I'm glad to have met you. Hope I'll see you soon again." Then he began to caress that insufferable down on his lip and turned to something on the mantel. His air plainly said that he would donate a few minutes of Molly's company. Jack felt himself choking, yet helpless.

But Molly had arisen, and she walked with Jack to the hall door. She stood there while he put on his overcoat and gloves. "It's been awfully jolly to have you," she said.

He contrived a smile, but it was a rueful one, and, suddenly, her eyes softened. "I'm afraid—I'm afraid we talked a lot about things that you weren't interested in," she said penitently. "But Dick"—

"Do you really like him?" Jack said.

"Yes, of course, I do,—just as I like Tom—and—you."

He beckoned her into the hallway with a mysterious nod. When she was close to him he whispered, "Will you talk to *me* as—as you did to him about—about what *we* know sometime—when he's by to hear us?"

She looked at him archly. His face was begging,

and her own relented. She never had seemed so beautiful to him as she did then. She held out her hand, and said, "I'll tell you something—I think mustaches are hideous!"

Jack registered a mental vow to wear a smooth lip forever. "And I hope his won't grow and that he'll never shave it off," he added to himself. If his exultation showed in his face, he did not speak it. He simply said "Good night."

All the way home he kept one hand—the ungloved one—in his coat pocket. There was a delicious tingling there where a little, warm palm had lain for a moment, or he fancied that there was, which was just as satisfactory.

IN June the Chambers closed their city house, and went to the Maine coast. Afterward, they planned to spend some time in the mountains. Jack felt that the sun had hidden its face when he saw the Boston express pull out of the long train-shed, and Molly's dainty figure shrink into a white blur upon the platform of the last coach. He went back to the Bank, counting the days which must elapse before he could get the letter which she had promised to send him when they were settled in the hotel. He was such a gloomy being that Jimmy rallied him; and, thereupon, discovered that Jack's boyishness was evaporating and that his illusions were tangible things sometimes.

Kate tasted the bitter and the sweet of finding that her comforting words, for once, failed to dissipate his unhappiness, but that he now spent most of his evenings at home. She drew a forlorn cheer from the fact that, after a month of brooding, he seemed to find something to interest him outside; and, as often as not, was out of the house by eight o'clock in the evening, not to return frequently until late. But even this diversion did not save him from oc-

casional fits of depression which her cheery words failed to dispel. The symptoms were not unique; she pacified the stirrings of her heart with the reflection that she could not expect him to live always in her life.

Early in that Spring Jack was promoted to a place in line with the cashier's office, and was given a salary double that which he had been receiving. His progress was phenomenal; Kate with all of her confidence in him conceded this, and realized wherein such progress must have its initiative. Jack acknowledged his indebtedness to Jimmy also; but he let her see that he identified in himself at least some of the qualities which were responsible for his advancement. "I mean to get on, mother," he said. "I'm sure I will."

It was an assertion of independence which pleased her. She wanted her boy to be a man all through. Self-reliance was a requisite. It was admiration of this attribute which helped to weaken her remonstrances when Jack's habit of spending his evenings away from home first made her uneasy. It was the way of every young man, she reflected. As Jack declared, "It's the only way of making friends outside of the Bank. I'll never get ahead, if I don't have them. Look at Jimmy! Where 'd he be, if he hadn't known a lot of people and been among them so much?"

The illustration was almost convincing to her;

yet that night, long after he had come in and fallen asleep, she stole to his room. His dark, smooth hair and handsome head against the pillow recalled to her a face which once had been enshrined by her girlish infatuation. His expression was so tranquil, so clear and youthful. In the little while she bent over him her apprehensions were stilled. She went back to her own room, rebuking herself for having harbored a doubt. Then, too, there was Jimmy; he had the utmost confidence in Jack.

Yet, perhaps, in her pride in Jack, Kate underestimated the watchfulness of Jimmy. Certainly, the latter saw a great deal more than she thought he did. It is equally sure that it was not his habit to be a casual observer. Kate should have got a hint of this as it related to Jack from a conversation which she had with Jimmy not many months later.

He was now a visitor at the house, and had dropped in on this evening soon after supper. About eight o'clock Jack appeared in the sitting room, to say good-night to his mother.

He was dressed stylishly, and he had a smart air about him which somehow jarred on Jimmy. He said "Good evening!" to the latter, then stooped and kissed his mother.

Jimmy always liked to see him do that. He had sometimes speculated as to what he would have his son do, if he had one; and, the first time

he saw Jack kiss his mother, he decided that that was certainly one of the things he would wish to have his son do always. It was queer what ideas came into an old bachelor's head! He would have been very much upset if they had leaked out.

On this evening, when Jack had gone out, Jimmy sat in silence a moment, then remarked, "He's a good sort of a boy."

"I guess he *is*," returned Kate; "there is no one just like him."

Jimmy smiled. "And you tell him that every day, of course?"

"Pretty often, I guess," admitted Kate. "But Jack's the sort that doesn't spoil; and, then—he thinks a great deal of me. That's some excuse."

"It's strange," mused Jimmy, but she caught a tantalizing gleam in his eyes.

"Yes, strange to an old chronic grumbler like you," she asserted. "To *me* it seems just as it should be. We're chums—Jack and I. I tell him everything, and he does the same by me."

Jimmy made no response at the moment; he seemed to be lost in contemplation of the toe of his boot. Then he asked, almost as if of himself, "Everything?" And, the next instant, went on quickly, in answer to her echo of the word, "I mean do you tell Jack everything? If you do, I'm going to object, right here. He must be laughing every time he sees me and thinks of some of th'

things I used to do and how I looked when I was a boy."

"Privately, he couldn't think you any bigger fool than you were," she retorted, laughing. "Oh, Jimmy! you were such a fool—once!"

"Maybe, maybe," he assented. "Anyway," he went on; "Jimmy in short pants and freckles and with newspapers—"

"And a pug nose and thin legs," put in Kate.

"And a long-legged, skinny girl for a friend," added Jimmy, and continued; "Jimmy like that is a—is very different from Jack. Sometimes *I* used to get my clothes at a 'hand-me-down's' while Jack—Jack, I daresay, he gets his at some good tailor's?"

"At Simpson's—one of the best places."

"I believe in keeping yourself neat," remarked Jimmy, but he made a mental note of the fact that Simpson was a fashionable tailor who charged the highest prices for his clothes. "In th' evenings," he went on aloud, "I used to be hustlin' round on my own account, or working for Brady. But Jack, he spends his evenings—"

"He spends a good many of them outside now. I'm rather glad of it. He's been so gloomy since—." She shot a glance of inquiry.

Jimmy nodded. "Since She left," he supplied. He laughed. "It's a pretty important 'she' with him."

Kate sighed. "Yes, but I guess it's all right."

"Of course it is," he rejoined. "As far as I can find out, she's a sensible sort of a girl. And she comes of good people. I know Mr. Chambers by reputation. He's a square man and has a level head. His wife, I hear, is a good deal of th' same kind. They could be right up on top in society, as they say, if they wanted to. But they don't seem to care so much for that crowd that they can't have a lot of friends that ain't so tony. They're in th' band-wagon themselves, but they know people of all sorts—'brown-stoners and footmen'—everyday folk—and plain people without anything but an honest name and a house number—like you and me." He seemed to enjoy the identification.

Kate laughed with him. Then she said quickly, "Jimmy, you know a lot about—everything."

"Oh, some things," he retorted lightly. And, more gravely, "But don't you worry about this girl business. Jack can't do better than go round with th' right sort of girl. If it ever comes to anything that girl 'll treat him th' way he deserves; and, as Mr. Chambers is her uncle I don't think there'll be any row raised."

"A dressmaker's son—" ventured Kate doubtfully.

"Is good enough for anybody, if he's straight and has got th' education Jack has. Now, don't talk any more that way; it makes me mad clear through. If there's any trouble, you watch me pile right into

it. But there won't be. I've sized up Chambers; he fills th' bill. If Jack behaves himself and th' girl comes to like him enough—why Jack Doran 'll be Jack Doran, and that's all there'll be to it. Anyway, that's going to be a long time ahead of where we are now. What we want to do is to help Jack all we can—at home. He can do more for himself outside than we can. Don't say a word about his going to see that Miss Struthers. She won't eat him. But keep up his spirits while she's away. Low spirits are like laziness—good ground to grow trouble. Work's good for him; that fills in th' daytime. What did you say he does in th' evenings?"

"He belongs to a club, for one thing. He spends much of his time at the Webster Literary and Debating Club. You've heard of it, of course. I hadn't before Jack told me about it; but, he says, that some of the cleverest fellows he knows go there. Anyway, I'm sure it's a great deal better for him than running on the street. Jack never dissipates. The worst he ever does is to play a game of billiards. That's not very bad, now, is it?" Her voice was vibrant with pride.

"Kate! Kate!" said Jimmy to himself. Then, as he watched her, her eyes shining, something got the matter with his own, and he excused her blindness. Nor should she be any the wiser, if he could help it, he decided. "Yes, Jack's heart is in th' right place, and he ought to get ahead," he told her.

But Kate thought the words spoken a little mechanically, under the circumstances. She wondered that Jimmy should seem to take such scanty interest in Jack's pursuits.

If she had seen Jack and Jimmy one afternoon, not long afterward, she might have changed her mind. It was in Jimmy's office at the Bank.

"Jack," said Jimmy, "th' note-teller's place is going to be vacant at th' end of this month. Calkins has resigned."

"Resigned!" Jack, at a sudden recollection, looked startled. Calkins had been note-teller at the Bank for six years almost, and was a particular crony of his. It was Calkins who had introduced him into one very pleasant place.

"Yes, resigned," said Jimmy. "Th' fact is, he was asked to resign. He was doin' things that you can't do in this bank, and stay here. For one thing, I found out that he was a member of th' Webster Literary and Debating Club—I think that was th' name of it. At least, it wasn't nothin' but a gambling den. *That* ended Calkins!"

Jimmy was looking directly at Jack but he did not seem to notice that the latter's hands were trembling. He went on in an even voice. "Of course, there ain't a word to be said about this. Specially don't speak of it to Calkins. I'm telling you about it, because—well, as much as anything else, because—

“I won’t!—I give you my word I won’t—” began Jack.

Jimmy caught him up briskly. “No, you don’t need to say that. I know you won’t—repeat what I’ve been saying to you. I trust you, my boy. That’s a good deal. Trust is a lot like money. As long as you’ve got it you can do business; if you lose it, nobody wants to have much to do with you. And trust’s easier to lose than money is—sometimes; and it’s scarcer, too. So you want to keep tight hold of what you’ve got. That’s what I’m trying to do—here—in th’ Bank. You know how I stand with th’ Bank; I told you when you came here. My word’s pledged to steer it straight, and not let anybody lose money in it. There’s a pile of people willing to bank on that, too. But—, well, I didn’t start in to preach; I told you about Calkins, because I wanted you to know what it was that knocked him out, and—made th’ place that you’re to fill—I hope.”

“Me? Note-teller? His place?” Jack in an instant was lifted from trembling fear to a pitch of delight that made him almost speechless. His eyes grew misty; as though Jimmy was far off, he heard him answer:

“Yes, at least, you’re to be acting note-teller till you get into harness and show that you can fill th’ place th’ way it’s got to be filled. And—that’s all.”

Jimmy turned to some papers on his desk. Jack walked away, trying to put his gratitude into words.

As he reached the door he was able to say, "*You know how much I think of this. I won't forget what—you've done for me. I'll be the kind you want, if it's in me; I give you my word!*"

Jimmy looked up quickly. His eyes seemed to Jack to bore him through. "All right," he said slowly; "*I'll take your word.*"

That night, when Jack told his mother of his advancement at the Bank, he said nothing of the conversation which Jimmy and he had had. After thinking it over he had decided that Jimmy would not wish him to refer to it in any way. If he did speak of it, he was afraid that his mother might get an inkling of why Calkins was to leave the Bank; and that—. Well, he had good reasons for desiring to keep this secret. For several weeks he lived in apprehension lest Calkins, learning who was to be his successor at the Bank, should, from spite, mention certain circumstances which were in his keeping.

But Calkins said nothing. Some one had taken precautions. Calkins had been told that the fact that he had been asked to resign should not be mentioned so long as he said nothing of the Webster Literary and Debating Club and its membership.

But, if Jack was ignorant of this, he did realize that Jimmy had a faculty for discovering things that seemed well hid, and that a big heart beat in that stumpy, little body, and that a clever brain

worked behind the blue eyes which peered from under their thatch of brown and gray and were so set about with wrinkles. He told his mother enthusiastically, " I believe Jimmy's about the smartest man I know of. He's good, too, though they do call him every bad name. He's a boss, and he makes politics pay; but, they'll be no better off, I'm sure, if they knock him out as they want to."

“**Y**OU don’t go out any more in the evenings,” remarked Kate, a week after Jack had been promoted at the Bank. “Have you gone back on those friends?”

“Not on my best friends,” he answered. “And I like to be home.”

“With me? You thought I was lonely! That’s the real reason. And I never thought of it!”

Jack said nothing, but even his silence reproached him. His mother’s heart put another construction upon his silence. “God Bless him! He’s a good son,” she said to herself. She went over to him, and put both arms about him in a mother hug. Recollection of his deceit stung him cruelly then. He wondered how he could have taken advantage of her trust. But that was all behind him now, and he meant that it should stay there. Yet he knew that this would not be without a struggle. There were times when a strange weakness stole upon him. Then he hardly understood himself. At such times his mother’s figure was obscured and he forgot her words. When these spells fell upon him the present—an easy going present in which he gratified the

whim of the moment and was carried away by the excitement which he sometimes craved—was all with which he concerned himself. The atmosphere of the Webster Literary and Debating Club had been congenial to this agreeable forgetfulness. As the best way to fortify himself against its attractions he was resolved to throw himself into his work with redoubled energy. The evenings he would spend in his mother's company until—until She came back to the city. He felt that in Her company he was safe.

Her letters to him had been few and filled to the brim most often with the names and news of people of whom he had never heard. She appeared to be supremely happy. And that did not seem just right to him. He tormented himself trying to decide what relation her happiness bore to the persons who figured frequently in her letters. Many of the things these persons did seemed silly to him, the things they said inane. He wondered that she should take the slightest interest in them. But he read her accounts of them over and over.

His own letters were often doleful and sometimes foolish. They were always serious. These epistles made plain that two buildings remained standing in the city—the Bank and his own home. Occasionally it appeared that the Chambers' mansion also had existence, though solely as a place of melancholy reflection. The people remaining in the city were

the writer, his mother, the writer, Jimmy, the writer and—the writer. The rest of the world was congregated at the place to which he addressed his letters.

But in the latter part of September the letters ceased; in a day the city became populous, and the sun shone bravely once more over a long desolated place. Jack came home late on that afternoon, his face glowing, a joyous note in his voice. Before he had spoken, his mother said, "Well, what kind of a time did they have?"

"Oh, splendid," he replied. "But she's very glad to get back. I saw her at the station. She's burnt brown; her hair's darker. She's taller than she was. She said I was taller, too. I'm glad I'm not short. She's going to be home all winter. She's coming out in society. She wrote me a letter that I never got, and one of mine she never got. Wasn't it queer? She——" He swallowed the rest with a gulp of tea which—made his face red.

His mother remarked that she was glad to hear that Mr. and Mrs. Chambers had had such a pleasant summer. But her gentle irony was wasted. Jack already had opened a new budget of the historic sayings and doings of *The Only Girl*. He was blind to the smile upon his listener's face. His enthusiasm and delight reasserted themselves in boyish fashion. The supper was a monologue before an audience of one.

A week later Jack received an invitation to dinner. It was extended informally by Mrs. Chambers. Yet for two days before *the* night, the subject of male attire was discussed in every bearing. Kate was posted on the latest fashions. It required all her tact and motherly persuasion to withhold him from the purchase of a "swallow tail." At first he was sure that his fortunes were irretrievably ruined if he wore the cutaway coat whose acquisition had marked the attainment of his majority.

When he arrived at his host's house, and saw that Mr. Chambers and Mr. Joseph Gans, the other guest were not in evening dress, he experienced a relief inexpressible.

It was the first time he had been in the house since Molly's return. He was delighted to find that his place at the table was next to hers. But he was made somewhat nervous by his surroundings. The burnished mahogany with its freight of silver and cut glass, the cabinets of delicate china and crystal, the plate racks on the walls, the ebon butler of majestic port and, most of all, the table itself with its plate and glass and a great bowl of loose roses in the center foreshadowed a ceremonial which made him uncomfortable. He was afraid that he would not come out of it gracefully. And under Her eyes! He was puzzled by the ranks of forks and knives at his place; he opened his napkin, unprepared for the enclosure of bread, and flushed when it fell on his lap.

But the apparent inattention to his awkwardness steadied him; and he was quick to take the cue from Molly. For some reason her fingers always sought the right knife and fork just a trifle earlier than did those of the other diners.

Mrs. Chambers began to chat with him about himself and things with which he was familiar; and this conversation, being conducted across Molly, the latter was drawn into it. Jack's embarrassment rapidly dissipated. By the time the roast was served he had made up his mind that, next to Molly and his own mother, his hostess was the loveliest woman in the world. He found himself telling her many things about himself and his life; she seemed to understand him. He felt no shame of these confidences; Molly's bright eyes approved.

When Mrs. Chambers turned to Mr. Gans who, tall, portly and grave, sat on her right hand, Molly and Jack began to talk of what she had been doing that summer. From her lips this all seemed new. He also had something important to tell her, but he postponed that.

He noticed that she was more subdued and formal than before she went away; there was a something subtle in her manner and voice which deepened her fascination, yet made him a little afraid of her. But, presently, Mrs. Chambers engaged Molly's attention, and he became a listener to the conversation at the other end of the table. Mr. Gans and Mr. Chambers

were talking politics. It was the former's favorite topic. "Devlin," he was saying, "is, in some respects, a remarkable man. I have known him personally, in a way, for many years. He saved my son from drowning when they both were boys, but he made no allusion to it for some time. When the occasion served he made that rescue the lever to get what he wanted. It was characteristic of him. But, of course, that was before I became an 'independent' in politics."

"Now you are at swords' points?" remarked Mr. Chambers.

"No, Devlin and I speak when we come across each other. As a man I find him interesting. But as a politician——"

"Dangerous? He will not be content, I think, to stop where he is?"

"Exactly. He intends to be *the* Boss. He will clear the way for that sooner or later. Then will come the supreme struggle."

"You fellows in the Citizens' League ought to gird up your loins against the day."

"We are doing all that we can. We constitute practically the only opposition to him. The minority party is a tool in his hands. It represents a hopeless cause in this city. Its success depends upon his coöperation. When it can be useful to him, he coöperates. The real struggle—when it comes to a head—will be between the reform element and its

allies, and Devlin's forces. As I forecast the situation it is not far off, either."

"Not in the City election this autumn? There seems to be a clear understanding on the nominations for Sheriff and other officers."

"No, I was not referring to the City election. That rascal Johnson whom they will put up for Sheriff suits the Minority party—so the opposition to us will be practically solid. It is in the character of Devlin's present ally—Walsh—that the promise of a division lies. Walsh is keen and ambitious. He will not always be content to be the subordinate; and Devlin plans that he shall be nothing more. There will be lively times when they clash. That will be our chance."

"Who will win?"

Mr. Gans raised his eyebrows deprecatingly.

"I mean do you think Devlin is invincible?"

"No, but strong, and every day, as things are at present, he's growing stronger. No man can say how long and binding are the lines which he has out. He has made the fortunes of a good many men, the misfortunes of some. He is strongest often in the quarters one would least suspect. Many big corporations are his allies perforce. He has money, and is always willing to put it out in the 'public interest.' Now there's the Central Railroad——"

"The Central Railroad has not been touched by him, so far as I am aware," replied Mr. Chambers

quickly. "We are an old corporation. Our rights were established before Devlin came into power."

"Pardon me, I intended no imputation. But some day—we'll see! Devlin will make the opportunity for you to call upon him—when he needs you. And you will have to accept the offer. Then we shall have you defending him."

"I do not think we shall ever be involved with him in that way. As for defending him, personally I am often inclined to do that now. I think Devlin has his share of good qualities. But—they don't show on the surface."

Jack wanted to thank Mr. Chambers for the speech. He felt a growing dislike for the bearded Gans. He would have said something himself in Jimmy's defence if he had known more of politics.

"I agree with you that Devlin is not all bad," continued Mr. Gans. "That is why he is dangerous. It is his virtues, if you can call them such, which have tightened his grip. What does he command to-day? The Water Trust—a political machine of enormous resources, corrupt with abuses; City Councils—for the most part at his beck and call because its members are elected at his direction; several members of the State Administration who have a lively remembrance of his labors in their behalf at election time. That is a fairly influential list of representatives, don't you think so?"

Mr. Chambers nodded. "Besides two United States Senators," he appended.

"Corson and Mabie? The first certainly; of Mabie's friendship for Devlin I have always had my doubts. Mabie is too domineering to work long in harness with Devlin. But Corson and Devlin are hand-in-glove. And Corson is one of the shrewdest and most unscrupulous men in public life to-day. Did you know he was indirectly a backer of the Union Bank?"

Jack pricked up his ears. "Yes," went on Mr. Gans, "he is, though I could not prove the connection. Corson and the State Treasurer are good friends—for obvious reasons. So the Union Bank gets—well, it gets a generous share of the State funds—in deposits. It can get more, too, if Devlin but says the word. But Devlin's a queer fellow about some things. He is uncomfortably blunt in speech sometimes. They say that Senator Corson once took him to Washington—to the White House. 'Mr. President,' said Corson, 'here is James Devlin, who has never been known to break his word.'

"Devlin bowed. Then with solemn face he said, 'I'm sorry that I can't say the same for my friend Corson, Mr. President.'

"Corson knew that he meant it, but he wasn't offended. At any rate, to-day, when we fight Devlin we have to be prepared to meet also the ranks of Corson's federal patronage in this city."

Mr. Chambers suddenly remembered Jack's presence and rebuked himself for his unintentional discourtesy. He looked at Jack. The latter was regarding Gans with frank dislike; he reddened when he saw that he was observed. Mr. Chambers explained to Mr. Gans, "Mr. Doran, here, is employed in the Union Bank, and is a friend of Devlin's. I suppose we owe him an apology for criticizing Devlin so freely."

Jack tried to say that it was all right; but he was but little appeased by Mr. Gans's rejoinder, "Why, I don't think that Devlin himself would resent what I said. The relations of the Bank and the State are a matter of record so far as the deposits go. Do you know your President personally?" he asked, turning to Jack.

"Why, of course, he does. Mr. Devlin is Mr. Doran's best friend. He is going to be one of my friends, too, I hope," answered Molly.

Jack gave her a look of gratitude which he did not try to conceal from the rest.

"So you are going into politics?" said Mr. Gans, smiling. "You will be an outspoken champion at least."

"I'll stand up for those who are honest with me and good to others," she retorted.

"There! You see!" Mr. Gans looked at his host. "Quid pro quo; Devlin's own doctrine. The cardinal principle of every successful Boss."

"Isn't it the principle underlying all business?"

"Yes, but it can be abused."

"Mr. Devlin doesn't abuse it," put in Jack. "He gives a great deal to people who do nothing for him."

"So?" replied Mr. Gans.

"It's true; I know it!" returned Jack a little hotly.

Mrs. Chambers intervened. She rose from the table. "And leave politics behind you," she warned.

When they were in the drawing-room Molly was asked to sing. She went to the piano at once. She had a clear, sweet soprano. Jack cast a withering glance on Mr. Gans who, after the first song, remarked, "Your daughter has a good voice, Mrs. Chambers." "Good!" thought Jack. "What is the man made off? It is celestial!" Yet Gans dared to profane the period of a second song with a low-toned conversation.

Molly left the piano, and took a seat on a sofa. Mrs. Chambers joined her husband and Mr. Gans. Jack went over to Molly. "Will you sing for *me* sometime?" he asked.

"Sometime. Did you hear what Mr. Gans said?"

"Yes; it disgusted me."

"Why?" She laughed. "He is quite a judge of music."

Jack gasped. "A judge of music! Why, he talked while you were singing the second time."

"Did he? It was good of him to listen at all."

There was no reply to be made to this opinion coming from such a source. "Do you sing?" she asked.

"Not a note. I wish I did. Do you like to hear other people sing?"

"Yes,—some people. Now, there's Dick; he——"

"Can *he* sing?"

"Didn't you know it? He's got a fine baritone."

"But he's got a *mustache*?" said Jack insinuatingly. He awaited her identification of the criticism.

"Yes, he's got a mustache. What of it?" she returned. She looked surprised.

"Nothing," he said when his astonishment would permit him to speak. How short was the memory of woman! Or—miserable thought!—perhaps, she hadn't meant it when she said she thought mustaches were hideous. He wished he knew. Then he realized that, after all, this was a childish sort of spite.

"Do you play the piano?" she inquired.

"No, I don't do anything."

"But you dance?"

"I—never tried."

"Oh!" She made a little round mouth. "I never heard of such a thing! You'll have to learn."

"I will," he said; and he meant it, though he had not thought of it seriously until that moment.

"Tom Rowell was the best dancer I knew until I

met a man at Bar Harbor this summer," she went on. "*He* was perfectly fine."

"Tell me something more about Bar Harbor," he urged. Anything to get away from Dick Gans and Tom Rowell.

She entered into the proposal willingly, and he listened. But Bar Harbor was a world almost unknown to him, inhabited largely, it seemed, by men in whom Molly took a deep interest. She noticed that his attention wandered. "You're not a bit interested," she complained.

"Yes, I am," he affirmed feebly.

"No, you aren't. I shan't tell you any more. I ought to go over and talk to Mr. Gans, anyhow."

"*Please* don't." His alarm was so palpable that she laughed. "Why not?" she asked.

"It—it's so much pleasanter here—where you are."

"Then I'll ask the rest to come here."

"No, don't."

"But it's only polite to do it—if this is the best place in the room."

"It won't be—when someone else comes," he declared boldly. He stole a look at her. Her eyes were hidden, but she did not appear to be displeased. "I want to talk to you—alone," he added. He remembered that he had not yet told her his important news. "I've had very good luck," he announced. "I've got an advancement at the Bank."

“That’s good,” she replied. “What is it?”

“I’ve been made note-teller.”

“Is that—high up?”

Somehow, his enthusiasm cooled. It was natural that she should ask this, yet her ignorance seemed to dwarf the new position. And he had built so many dreams upon it! “No, it isn’t so very high,” he said slowly. “But it’s a considerable jump for a fellow who’s been in the Bank so short a time as I have. It’s in line for promotion.”

“I’m very glad,” she returned.

It had been his intention to explain to her the relation which the various positions in the Bank bore to one another, and to make plain to her that advancement from the place of note-teller to that of President was a mere matter of time together with a dozen deaths, removals or resignations. But the outlook abruptly had lost its rosy hue; the subject had become prosaic. Again he realized that there had been a change in Molly. She was no less an ideal, but her real self had become more elusive. She seemed to be at a distance from him—to be an idol to be worshipped humbly. He regarded her with some awe. How had he ever ventured to think of her as a good fellow?

He was silent so long that she said, “What are you thinking about?”

“About—you,” he declared, and trembled at his temerity.

"What did you think about me?" She slipped a small ring up and down on her finger and studied it.

"I—I don't know—just what." It was the last thing he meant to say.

"Something—nice?"

"Of course."

"Then tell me about it."

He wanted to, but he couldn't. A strange fear was on him. She seemed so grown-up. Urged on by his desires, restrained by a dread of appearing ridiculous, he was trying to frame his ideas, when she looked up and exclaimed, "It's stupid here! Let's go over, and talk to the rest."

"No, no. Please stay here," he said quickly. "I want to talk to you."

"Well, go on then."

"But I can't—if—you don't say something."

"I have. I said 'go on.'"

"But—you know what I mean," he protested. "You must talk, too."

"What shall I say?"

"Anything," desperately.

"Very well then. I'll tell you a story. Once upon a time there was a girl who went away in the summer."

"To the Maine coast?"

"Never mind where. She had a very good time. There were lots of men there. Some of them were

good looking, and a few—a very few—weren't so good looking. They seemed to like this girl. I don't know why."

"I do."

"Keep quiet now. I don't know why they liked this girl. I suppose, because she was fond of dancing and played tennis and paddled round in a canoe and liked them—the men, I mean. Yes, it must have been that; for they were always asking her to dance and talking to her and taking her in their canoes. At least, two of them—two of the men—did. (Jack squirmed.) One of them was named—but it doesn't matter about his name. We'll call him The Best Dancer Ever Was. The other—man—was a fine canoe paddler. He came from the city where the girl lived. He sang well and was tall and had—light hair and——"

"You never told me that Mr. Gans was there," muttered Jack.

"You're interrupting. It isn't polite. I was going to say that this girl thought—But, I guess, you've heard enough. Haven't you?"

Jack wavered. "No, go on," he said abjectly. He knew that if she did not tell him, the rest of his life would be a torment of doubt."

"Well, then," she went on, "the girl thought that this man was very—Let me see? (Jack's attention was startling.) Very good fun. She had lots of good times with him. (Jack groaned inwardly.)

And a few days after she came home, he came home, too. He asked her if he might come and call on her. And she said—No. It was for this evening, too, by the way. Now—why do you suppose she said he couldn't call? ”

Jack, in an ecstasy, did not dare to give his own explanation. The transition from dull despair had paralyzed his tongue momentarily.

“I'll tell you,” she said. “But you mustn't tell anyone.” She leaned toward him and put her mouth close to his ear, so close that he fancied a loose curl brushed his cheek an instant. “It was because,” she whispered; “because another man was coming that evening. And she——” It grew upon Jack, in the moment in which she hesitated, that all the interests of life had come to a point. “And she—she liked this other man ever so much. His name was——”

“Who?” cried Jack in a voice of such dreadful agitation that Mrs. Chambers looked quickly round.

Molly had straightened up. She was twirling the ring on her finger. “His name was Mr. Joseph Gans,” she said collectedly. “And I must go over and talk to him right away.”

Jack collapsed. Nor did he ever know all that his outcry accomplished.

One thing that it did accomplish was to bring about a more definite understanding between Mr. and Mrs. Chambers as to his future visits to the house. It

awoke in Mrs. Chambers's heart the same instinct which had alarmed Kate when Jack first talked of Molly. That evening, after their guests had gone, Jack was weighed in the balance of a consultation between his host and hostess.

"I have always agreed with you," said Mrs. Chambers, "that we should judge people by their personal worth. No one has found our doors closed because of what their forefathers were, or because of their social standing, or fortune. But, when it comes to Molly!"

"Molly?" Mr. Chambers repeated wonderingly. There is an astigmatism in man's vision which is revealed to women when he cites the evidence of his eyes in an argument of this kind. So, now, when Mr. Chambers protested, "Molly? And that boy, Jack Doran? It's absurd!" Mrs. Chambers merely raised her brows, and was not dissuaded.

"Nevertheless," she returned, "this is a question I want you to answer. Young Mr. Doran's mother is a seamstress—a good woman, I have no doubt; but in birth, education, environment and ideals, very different from Molly. His father, from all I have learned, is—unmentionable. The friend of the family is—J. Devlin—Boss. If inheritance, surroundings and the company of his patron have any influence on the boy, is he likely to be just the one for our Molly?"

“ But it’s sheer nonsense to look at him in the light of—in that way.”

“ Perhaps, but give me your opinion.”

Mr. Chambers was silent for a minute. Then he said slowly, “ If the boy himself is all right, and Molly comes to—to love him—if that is what you mean——. Well, what would *you* say then? ”

“ I would say God bless them! and do all I could to make them happy,” she answered earnestly.

Her husband looked straightly at her. “ Where did you find out all this about young Doran’s parents? ”

“ Much of it from himself. Tom Rowell started me thinking. He told me some things; I asked him about others.”

“ Doubtless, they are all true,” replied Mr. Chambers. “ But let us give the boy a chance to prove himself. Isn’t that fair? Besides Molly is very young yet.”

“ She has grown years older this summer. One or two things she said about young Gans opened my eyes. He is very attentive to her. That is another reason why Molly shouldn’t see too much of this Mr. Doran—if we are not going to approve of him—later on. It is for his sake as well as hers.”

“ Yes; that is right. But I am not ready to say that I do not approve of him.”

“ Nor am I. We must find out all we can of his

life and ideals. And especially of the company he keeps."

"Which fits well with a proposition I have to make," he replied. "What would you say to asking his patron—Devlin here to—dinner, we will say?"

Mrs. Chambers made a little grimace. "Do you mean that?"

"I do. It isn't altogether an unselfish plan, I'll admit. I want to meet this man; he interests me. And the only way in which I can talk to him as I wish is to have him here. Nor do I think he will be offensive. In any event we need not ask him again, if you do not wish it. But, aside from all this wouldn't it afford a good chance to find out what influences he brings to bear on young Doran? I imagine Devlin is the sort of man who would leave his mark upon anyone who stands as close to him as this boy appears to stand."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Chambers reflectively. "But a political Boss! What *will* they say of us after this?"

"Do you care if *we* are satisfied?" Mr. Chambers knew that the day was won.

"No, but—well, the cultivation of incongruities, as they are called, seems to be our bent. So let us have 'J. Devlin—Boss'—if he will come."

"He will come, I think," returned Mr. Chambers. "I have an idea that his watch over that boy takes a form not unlike our watch over Molly. Preposter-

ous as it may sound, he may be as anxious to take the measure of Jack Doran's new friends as we are to find out about Molly's."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Mrs. Chambers in comic despair. "You will be attributing the graces of a Bayard to him next."

"Let us judge of that for ourselves," concluded her husband, laughing.

On Jack's next visit Mr. Chambers broached the subject of inviting Jimmy to dine with them. "Informally, of course," he added. "If you will come with him our party will be complete."

Jack made his delight very plain. He was prouder of Jimmy than any one knew. In the first flush it did not occur to him that Jimmy might not shine here as elsewhere. When a doubt did flash upon him his face clouded. "I'll ask him," he said. "I hope he can come."

"But he *must* come," insisted Molly.

"He's so busy, you see," began Jack apologetically. It was the first excuse that suggested itself.

"He is coming," announced Molly. A sparkling look told him that she had some plan. As he was about to leave that evening she put an envelope into his hand. "It's my invitation," she said. "Give it to—Jimmy. Don't you dare look at it."

But when Jack delivered Mr. Chambers's message, Jimmy looked grave. He told Jack to thank Mr.

Chambers. He could not accept his invitation just then; he was too busy.

"But here's a note for you," said Jack. "Read that first."

Jimmy read the note with twinkling eyes. He handed it to Jack who read it. It was as follows:

"DEAR MR. DEVLIN:

"I want you to see what an honored place you have in my autograph collection. So you *must* accept my Uncle's invitation. Be ready to tell me all about politics and how it feels to be a Boss. I shall expect you.

"Yours sincerely

"MOLLY STRUTHERS."

Jimmy had been watching Jack's face. Something he saw there brought a light into his own such as only Kate had seen. It was the same look which had softened his mouth and suffused his eyes when he leaned over Jack, then a baby in his crib.

So, now, when Jack raised his eyes, and begged, "Jimmy, you will go, won't you? I want you to meet Miss Struthers," Jimmy said slowly, "Yes, I guess I'll have to, after all. But it can't be till after election. I've got more to do than I can get through with at nights. You tell Mr. Chambers that I'll be glad to come then—if th' invitation holds good. And tell Miss Struthers for me that I'll find out all I can meanwhile about Bosses to tell her."

“**I** SEE that Walsh has got what he was itching for.” The speaker was Senator Corson. He sat at a table in his usual hotel room; beside him was Jimmy. It was a week after the last of the autumn primary elections had been held.

“Yes,” said Jimmy. “He got th’ nomination for Sheriff. A nice rumpus it’s stirred up. It’s come out, so far, just as I told him it would.”

The Senator was regarding Jimmy closely. “As you told him?” he said. “Then you couldn’t persuade Johnson to withdraw.”

“You see for yourself. Johnson was stubborn. Th’ fact is he had been promised th’ place. Th’ minority party had agreed to support him, if he needed it. So he got his back up when I told him that we’d have to give Walsh th’ party nomination. He said he was in th’ fight to stay—Walsh or no Walsh. He had a good card to play, too. Th’ minority party had all lines out for him, and he was a stronger man than they could find in their own crowd. So they agreed to stick by him when I—when Walsh came into th’ field. Th’ result is there’s two tickets in th’ race, besides that of th’ Reformers;—Johnson with a

big personal backing and th' minority organization, and—and—Walsh."

The Senator's eyelids fluttered "And you back of Walsh?" he said quietly.

"I'm back of th' nominee of my own people, of course," answered Jimmy without flinching. "But *you* understand what we're in for," he went on.

"And at th' worst time, too—with a National election that'll keep us all on th' jump only a year away."

"Things 'll quiet down locally by then," said the Senator. This time his eyelids dropped. But Jimmy kept his eyes on the other's face. "Maybe," he said. "But there's goin' to be th' biggest kind of a row first."

"So?" The lowered eyelids were raised and dropped again. Jimmy's glance was unwavering. The fox watched the fox, each in his own way. "Personally," Jimmy said, "I'm afraid Walsh is goin' to have a hard fight to get in."

The Senatorial tongue clacked. Jimmy apparently heard it not. "You know, I'm as cautious as Walsh is sometimes cock-sure," he explained. "So, when he says 'I'll be elected without turning a hair,' I say, 'you'll have a pile of scratching to do to get in at all.'"

"A purely personal opinion?"

"Entirely so."

For a minute there was silence. The Senator pursed his lips. "Well, I hope Walsh won't be—

disappointed," he remarked. A sidelong glance under his lids met Jimmy's vacant look half way. With that the subject of Walsh's chances was dropped.

Presently, the Senator hoisted himself in his chair by his elbows, and gave an introductory cough. "The State Treasury receipts have been heavy lately," he observed.

"Have they?"

"Yes, and, of course, a part of them has to be banked."

Jimmy's head was inclined, and the Senator went on reflectively, as if the topic was one of casual interest, "What's the balance of the State in the Union Bank—roughly, I mean?"

Jimmy named it in round figures. The Senator caught his lip between his teeth. "I thought it was larger," he commented. "I understand they think of increasing it."

"I hadn't heard of it."

"It's so. What do you think of it?"

"What do you?"

"I should say—take the money, if it's offered."

"Why?"

"Speaking as a friend?"

Jimmy smiled. "No, in the—public interest."

"I should advise taking it because the Union Bank is a safe institution and——"

Jimmy waited with an aspect of patience, but chafed at this polite and meaningless preamble.

“And because,” the Senator went on, after considering his words, “We want you to stand as well before the people of this city as is possible. A weakness in the Bank might be ammunition for the opposition. As you said a while ago, we’ll need all of our strength in the National election next November.”

“At th’ State Convention for representatives to the National Convention, you mean,” amended Jimmy. “That’s th’ nut to be cracked. And Mabie wants th’ kernel.” It was an exposure of the Senator’s motives which forced a thin smile to his mouth. “But,” continued Jimmy, and his voice unconsciously grew proud, “As to th’ Union Bank you need have no fears. You know, that I stand behind that institution in person. It doesn’t have to rely on State deposits.”

“But it won’t refuse them,” added the Senator. “Every bank of repute wants the deposits, and some of them get them. You can’t mean that you want the State’s account at the Union Bank withdrawn?”

“No. What I do want is to know what is expected in return for th’ increase of those deposits.”

The Senator raised his eyelids with an upward toss of his head. He laid one hand on the table, open, then shut the fingers slowly. The action was full of suggestion. “To help close up the lines of the party in this State—tight,” he said in a high, penetrating voice. “There’s been differences between us—Senator Mabie and you. We don’t want any

more of them. Devlin, *we* know that you are the man to be reckoned with here, and nobody else. Walsh and Showell—? Well, we'll say nothing of them now. The point is you and the Senator and myself can't afford to split on anything in politics."

Jimmy's face was bland. Not by so much as a quiver of a muscle did he indicate how this intelligence affected him. He replied quietly, "I can see nothing that we're likely to differ on now. When you come up for reelection I shall support you—as matters stand. But as for pledging my word to shut my mouth and play a thinking part when—well, say just for instance, when it comes to instructing representatives to a convention of any kind—I won't do it."

"I didn't expect you to," the Senator returned, but his voice said that he was disappointed. Then, more spiritedly, "You'll always have the right to talk up. All we want is to have the majority rule. It's the first principle of our government," he concluded with sarcastic levity.

"It's th' principle *I* go on," Jimmy answered quickly. "I'm ready to do what th' majority wants every time. But it's got to be proved to me in black and white that it *is* a majority—th' majority that I'm answerable to."

"Just so. Nothing 'll be asked of you but what a majority demands. But we needn't get worked up over this. I knew you wouldn't take those additional

State deposits without an explanation. And that's the whole story."

The conversation which followed was in the same key; it ended in a tacit understanding that the Union Bank would take the funds in question. The Senator left town the same day; Jimmy went back to work on problems which, just then, were of more moment to him than his relations with the two gentlemen who sat for his State in the Senate at Washington.

Politics in the city were in a condition of uncertainty which made the wisest shake their heads. The Citizens' League and every voter who pinned his faith on political reform, for the first time in many years, had reasonable hope as the basis for his expressions of confidence.

Walsh's defeat was prophesied by these as the first step in the downfall of the Three Czars and especially the ruin of Jimmy. And Jimmy smiled at this, yet kept his ears wide open. For, whatever his opinion on this specific case, he understood that there were many who looked for the millennium when his fall should be accomplished, and a good many who fixed an early date for it and prepared against the day.

They complained of his control of politics, of his growing domination of the municipal service and his autocratic behavior. They foresaw his purposes better than did Walsh and some others, Jimmy told himself. For that reason he gave a great deal of

quiet attention to the prospective removal of their complaints, though, apparently he had no intention of yielding an inch to the men who made them. He saw his goal straight ahead of him, and made for it.

Joseph Gans, honest and intelligent, he respected, but did not allow to disturb him. Most important, at the present hour, was the dilemma in which Walsh had placed him. If Jimmy had told all that he knew of the possibilities of the situation forced upon him by Walsh, many things might have happened differently.

Walsh, with a ten thousand dollar office almost in his fingers, was busy with his canvassing and self-congratulation. Showell, who had an understanding with Walsh as to certain privileges which would be within the latter's gift as Sheriff, was wholly occupied with the latter's campaign. Election night came to read them both a lesson in the industry of the mole.

On that evening Walsh was in the American Club, whose political sympathies he had long swayed and whose President he was. In a back room he was reading the returns from the polling places and talking with some friends when Showell came in, breathing stertorously from that corner of his mouth which was not occupied with the perpetually revolving cigar.

Walsh looked at him with vague alarm. Showell's face was perspiring and red, and his big, droop-

ing mustaches made him resemble a walrus more than ever. His little eyes were snapping with excitement. He plucked Walsh by the sleeve, and nodded toward a corner of the room.

Walsh followed him. "What's th' matter?" he asked the moment they were out of hearing of the crowd.

"Matter enough!" answered Showell, thumping one palm with a fist like a ham. "Matter enough! Th' fat's in th' fire. Jimmy's turned you down!"

"Jimmy turned me down?" repeated Walsh incredulously.

"That's what I said. He's turnin' in th' whole Water Works gang at th' polls for Johnson, an' he's doin' it at th' very last, so we can't do anything. We can't stop him. Johnson 'll be elected. Y're a dead rabbit, Ed! He's done for you!"

"I don't believe it?" exclaimed Walsh. "Why, he told me—he told me I should have th' nomination. Jimmy himself gave me his word—that—that—" He halted, suddenly, the exact words of Jimmy's promise recurring to him.

"Yes, I know he promised y' th' *nomination*, and y' got it. But this is th' *election* an' he's put th' knife in y'," Showell said. "He lied t' you—he lied t' you an' t' me." In a fury, he burst into expletives.

But Walsh was of a different make. His face had grown very white; behind his glasses his cold

eyes narrowed; his thin lips set themselves tightly. He was sure that Showell had forecasted his fate. He did not need the verdict of the last returns from the polling places to tell him the facts. He understood some things now which before had not seemed worthy of attention; and these incidents all pointed the same way. He felt the bitterness of a defeat that was totally unexpected. But this bitterness was too deep to be relieved by curses.

"No," he said to Showell. "No, Jimmy didn't lie to me—to us. Jimmy never lies. But he tricked us! He played us like a couple of fools!"

"What did he do it for?" asked Showell, who took in suddenly presented truths slowly. "What did he do it for?"

Walsh had taken off his glasses, and was deliberately polishing them with a spotless handkerchief. His face was as hard as steel. He replied to Showell slowly.

"What did he do it for? Jimmy did it because he thinks one boss is better than three. He means to be that one."

Then, after a moment's pause, "But he isn't that boss yet. He's got some years to live, and so have I. Wait—and see!"

“**M**R. DEVLIN, I am glad to meet you and have you here.”
“I am glad to be here, Mr. Chambers.”

That was all there was to it. Jack who looked on with proud eyes was freed from any lingering doubt as to how Jimmy would conduct himself in this new world. Mr. Chambers's welcome had been received as unconcernedly as it had been proffered unaffectedly. It was the meeting of two men who had more in instinct, and ideals than either of them suspected. The time was early one evening in the December following the City elections.

Mr. Chambers led the way to the library, where they found Mrs. Chambers and Molly; and Jack, for once, was satisfied to stand aside and see Molly give all of her attention to another man. It made him happy to watch the faces of his two friends as they talked. He was almost a silent member of the little circle which had Jimmy for its center until dinner was announced. Then, to his delighted surprise he saw Jimmy offer his arm to his hostess as if he had been doing the thing all of his life. Nor was Mrs.

Chambers's surprise any the less. These on-lookers forgot that Jimmy had not associated for twenty odd years with political leaders and the bruisers of ward politics only. Nor did it occur to them, perhaps, that it was this adaptability—mayhap, no more than the imitative faculty cultivated for specific purposes, yet cultivated until it had become second nature—which among other qualities enabled “J. Devlin—Boss” to hold his own with men of divers kinds.

At the table Jack was seated next to Molly. Jimmy was placed between his host and hostess. Here again those marveled who regarded him with eyes of pride or covert curiosity. The mystery of many forks and napkin-enclosed bread was no mystery to one who had attended more banquets than any of his companions at the table. As for the formality consequent upon the brief acquaintance of guest and entertainers that soon wore off under the merry fire of Molly's questions, Mrs. Chambers's gentle tact and Mr. Chambers's hearty interest. So they were all talking easily, and Jack was willing to be largely a listener. The last trace of restraint disappeared when Jimmy told a story of his early life in answer to Molly's query. Jack found himself included in the story, and complained, “Why, you never told *me* that?”

“There are many things Mr. Devlin hasn't told you that he's going to tell me,” Molly returned.

"You *will* tell me all the secrets about Mr. Doran, won't you, Mr. Devlin?"

"Yes, I will; but they mustn't go any further," answered Jimmy. "If you told them I'd get into serious trouble with Jack's mother."

"You do well to keep on the side of the mothers," put in Mrs. Chambers. "They are very jealous creatures."

"Yes," said Jimmy. "But they're th' ones we have to look to for most of what's good."

"So you are a champion of women?"

"I don't know much about them." Then, confidentially, "Th' truth is I'm afraid of 'em. But I don't let that out generally."

"But you defend them," said Mrs. Chambers, laughing.

"Not exactly. If I speak well of them it's to sort of—pacify 'em."

"Then you think they can hold their own with the men?"

"More than hold their own, more than hold their own," affirmed Jimmy solemnly. "It's simply a question of their wanting a thing. When they do, they get it. When they come after me up go my hands, if I can't run away."

"At this rate we shall have you pushing a bill for Woman's Rights, if you go to the Legislature," declared Mr. Chambers.

"No, said Jimmy; "I would n't do that. I

want to stick in politics a while longer. But," earnestly, "I would like to see a bill passed giving every woman in this State a hand in the management of th' public schools. The women could do a great deal more for the schools than most of th' men do."

"My own idea," agreed Mrs. Chambers. "But I didn't look for such an opinion from any one in politics."

"Politicians all have had mothers, and some of them remember them long after they've forgotten most everything else," replied Jimmy. He checked himself sharply. "But I'm talking a lot about women, ain't I? It must make you laugh."

"No, it doesn't make me laugh," said Mrs. Chambers quietly. She was looking at him with new interest.

"And you can't say too many nice things about the women, either," added Molly. "I'm awfully glad you think so much of them. I've changed my mind about Bosses."

"Why, what did you think of—Bosses?" interrogated Jimmy.

"That's one of my secrets. But it didn't seem to me that they could be like other men."

"Yes, th' same old fools," said Jimmy, wagging his head despairingly. "But, after all, why shouldn't they be just th' same as other men; they were all boys once upon a time. Perhaps, you know a boy now that 'll be a Boss some day."

“Not Mr. Doran?”

“No, not Jack. He’ll never go into politics, if I can keep him out.”

Mrs. Chambers caught the determined note in his voice. “But why not?” she asked. “*You* wouldn’t change, would you?”

“No, I wouldn’t change. I couldn’t now, if I would, I guess. I’ve got to stick to it to th’ end. But Jack didn’t start in at it, and—you know he is different from me in plenty of ways.” His eyes rested on Jack as he spoke, and his hostess did not misunderstand the look. Her heart warmed to him.

“You’re fond of young people, aren’t you?” she said.

“Yes, I am. They’re—well, I like ’em.”

“When you were a boy, did you ever think of being a Boss?” asked Molly.

Jimmy’s face wrinkled. “That’s long ago,” he answered. “But, maybe, I did. Anyway, I hadn’t much of a chance to choose. I was pitched into politics head-first. But I liked it, and I like it still a good bit. I’ve gotten along in it so—so, perhaps, because, I took such a shine to it. But all boys ain’t alike. A little rough handling does ’em all good, is my notion; but with some of ’em you got to be careful; they ain’t able to last it out, and lose their grip.”

“It is a rough school, of course,” remarked Mr. Chambers.

“Rougher than anybody not in it knows. Some people say it don’t have to be so; but that’s got to be proved yet.”

“It makes men, though?” observed Mr. Chambers tentatively, and waited for a reply which he much wanted to hear.

But Jimmy only echoed the words, “Yes, it makes men.” He spoke with a dryness that did not escape his listeners; he turned to his plate, as if he had said it all.

“And a good many strong men?” persisted his host.

“Strong men, and some that—ain’t so strong,” said Jimmy in the same dry tones. His mouth tightened; he showed his reluctance to pursue the subject.

Molly had been trying to frame a question for some time. In her eagerness she put it rather boldly. “Aren’t lots of them—honest, Mr. Devlin?” She spoke as if some one had declared to the contrary, and Jimmy looked at her quickly, a grim smile on his lips.

“Yes,” he replied challengingly. “Many of them are honest. Some that don’t get th’ credit for it, and some that get more credit than their capital warrants.” He saw the puzzled expression on her face at the last words, and explained, “I mean that some politicians, because they talk a lot about bein’ straight and all that, are expected to be honestest than th’ people that are trusting them. They’re expected

to be honestest than th' law calls for. Now, that ain't fair. Th' laws are there for everybody; th' business man don't worry a bit about what he does so long as he keeps within th' laws. He'd make a great row if anybody said he hadn't any right to th' money he made by squeezing some little fellow out of trade in the same line, or by 'cornering' th' market for his goods and making you pay big prices, or by giving some woman ten cents for sewing a garment that he sells for ten dollars. He'd say that was 'trade' or something of that kind, and it was all right. But th' politician is expected to live on—air, I guess. And th' fellows that haven't done a stroke toward finding a good man for an office call him all sorts of names if th' man picked out ain't—an angel in disguise. They want their office-holders ready-made; they want 'em to know just how to run a place without ever having been in politics. I wonder what th' head of some big business establishment would say if a fellow that hadn't had a day's experience should come to him, and ask for one of his best positions? He——”

Jimmy suddenly realized that he had been speaking uninterruptedly and to an audience of four intent listeners for a long time. He laughed awkwardly, and began to apologize. But Mr. Chambers asked him to go on. “You’ve been hitting hard,” he said; “but you’ve hit some nails right on the head.”

Molly begged him to go on also; but Jimmy was

firm. "I guess what we politicians are doin' is trying to get all that we can without getting brought into court," was his final response. It was said with a grim appreciation of fact rather than in a tone of contrition or even self-accusation, and Mrs. Chambers looked a little shocked.

Jack felt that Jimmy was on the defensive, and that he ought to come to his rescue. "I heard one of the Directors at the Bank say," he declared; "that you spent two dollars in helping other people for every dollar you spent on yourself."

The moment that he uttered this Jack knew that he had made a blunder. Jimmy grew a dull red and shot his disapproval in a glance at the speaker. Mrs. Chambers did not disguise her surprise. But Molly saved the day. "I knew it! I just knew it when I got that note of yours!" she cried. "That's the reason you told me not to trust Mr. Doran. You knew he'd give away secrets."

They all laughed. The moment of strain was past. Mrs. Chambers began to talk to Jimmy about the work of a certain mission among the children of the slums. It took but a few minutes for her to discover that he knew many things about this mission and its labors which she did not. Incidentally, she surprised him into a halting confession that he had been interested in similar work in two wards down-town before the mission came into existence. But, when she grew curious as to where the funds came from

to carry on the work whose origin he referred to indefinitely, all her strategy was baffled. He suddenly began to relate the story of a family of Irish children—a story which made his hearers laugh and then brush their eyes.

The coffee was served in the library; Jimmy with plain satisfaction lighted the cigar which his host gave him. "You like a cigar?" said Mr. Chambers.

"A good one—like this, very much. Tobacco and music are what I enjoy most," he replied.

"Music!" said Molly. "Do you ever go to Grand Opera?"

And then Mrs. Chambers was astonished as she had seldom been. "Whenever I can," he answered. 'It isn't often that I get th' chance to go; for they usually find something for me to do down our way nights. But, now and then, I get th' chance to see what they call Grand Opera, and I take a seat in th' family circle. But it's a toss-up with me between Grand Opera and a good darkey song. Anything that's played or sung th' way it ought to be."

Molly yielded to Jack's urgings. "It's very different from Grand Opera, but I'll sing for you, if you'd like," she said to Jimmy.

"Will you? I wish you would," he said.

She chose a song which had what he described as "tune;" and he seemed to enjoy it. Then she played one of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words, because it was a favorite of hers. When

she turned on the piano stool as the last note died away, she saw that he was gazing into the fire, his face smoothed of all its lines.

He became aware of the silence and that they were looking at him. He gave a little start of embarrassment. But he said nothing, and began to pull vigorously on his cigar. It was out. Mr. Chambers proffered him a match, and he struck it and lighted his cigar still without speaking. Then, "Thank you," he said to Molly in a low voice. He made no comment on her singing or playing.

Presently, Mr. Chambers said, "I suppose you will be very busy from now on until next November?"

"Yes, there's a great deal to do in a Presidential year, always."

"And more than usual this year on account of the fight that will be made if Grant's name comes up?"

"Grant will not be—" he began decisively, and finished, "will not be th' only man to figure in th' Convention."

"General Grant!" said Molly. "Why, of course, he will be elected President."

"What makes you think Grant will be elected?" asked Jimmy quietly.

"Because he's been a President before, and knows how to be one," declared Molly, as if that settled it.

Jimmy smiled at this unconscious citation of his

own argument. "There's something in that?" he returned. "But, do you know, that is just th' reason why, in this case, a good many people don't want him for President?"

"I never heard such nonsense," she scoffed.

Mr. Chambers explained. "You see, Molly, this is a great country for changes. We don't care to have one man on top too long. Some people think it's too much like having a King over them. Now, General Grant has been President twice, and that is twice as long as most men have held the place. So a large number of our voters seem to be bitterly opposed to having him considered again as a candidate. But Senator Mabie is not one of them, I hear," he added, winking at Jimmy.

"I'd vote for Grant," asserted Molly. "He was our greatest general."

"That is a sufficient argument for many persons, isn't it?" Mr. Chambers's remark was addressed to Jimmy.

The latter nodded. "Yes, but—well, we shall see what we shall see," he replied sagely.

"Are you against General Grant?" asked Mrs. Chambers.

"That's not fair," her husband interposed. "We mustn't catechise Mr. Devlin while he's our guest. Remember, his views are not to be made public prematurely."

Jimmy was smiling. He addressed himself to

Mrs. Chambers. "I couldn't answer your question right now, in any event," he said. "If I did I might have to go back on myself later on. I know that it isn't th' general opinion, but it's so just th' same. A politician—like myself, we'll say—hasn't any ideas of his own on these things at th' start. If he has, he ought to keep 'em quiet until he sees what th' people he stands for think about th' thing. Then he can speak out. If they think th' way he thought—th' way he tried to make 'em think, perhaps, on th' quiet—all th' better. If they don't, then th' best thing he can do is to decide he didn't know his own mind at th' start. For if he keeps buckin' against 'em—doing th' things they don't want—his name is likely to be Dennis Mud."

"That's funny," remarked Mrs. Chambers, "I can't say that I see much 'bossing' in that."

"It's one of th' secrets of being a boss," answered Jimmy impressively, but his twinkling eyes made them doubt if he was entirely in earnest.

"Who is Dennis—Mud?" whispered Molly to Jack.

"He was an old friend of Jimmy's," said Jack gravely.

"Tell me about your friend, Dennis Mud," said Molly.

Jimmy saw the joke. "All right," he responded promptly, "I will. Dennis was an Irishman whose real name was Patrick Govern. He was very fond

of a drop—when he couldn't get a bottle. One night he was at a christening, and, when morning came, he found himself in a strange part of th' city, wandering th' streets with such a tight head that, to save him, he could get but one idea out of it, and that was th' name of th' baby that had been christened—Dennis. But his spirits were first rate. So, when a policeman came along and told him to move on, he said he'd think about it. Then th' policeman took him by th' collar—to help him think, I guess; and, with that, Pat got mad. He knocked th' policeman down, and sat on th' curb to think it over. But th' policeman got another officer, and, between them, they began to hustle Pat along. Then Pat woke up in earnest; and they had a big scrimmage. Pat thought they ought to go down th' street; th' policemen thought they ought to go up. Th' majority was for going up th' street, so up they went, th' whole lot of them falling and rolling in th' gutter, now and then. In the end they landed in th' Magistrate's. Th' Magistrate asked Pat his name. Pat was a sight, all plastered with mud. But, for all th' knocks he had got, th' only name that came to him was th' baby's. So he answered, promptly enough, 'Dinnis, y'r Honor.'

“ ‘Dennis what?’ demanded th' Magistrate.

“ But it was Dinnis, or nothing with Pat, so he repeated ‘Dinnis,’ and mumbled something else which nobody understood.

“ ‘Dennis what?’ again said th’ Magistrate.

“ ‘Mud,’ suggested one of th’ bystanders, with an eye on Pat’s gutter decorations.

“ ‘Dennis Mud, eh?’ repeated th’ Magistrate. ‘Is that your name?’ staring at Pat.

“ Pat nodded cheerfully.

“ ‘All right,’ said th’ Magistrate. ‘It’s ten days in jail, then, for getting drunk, Dennis; and it’s ten days more by token of your last name.’

“ ‘And that’s what Dennis Mud got for being of a different opinion from th’ majority.’

“ I was sure there was a story,” declared Molly, when the laugh had subsided. Jack made no comment. Jimmy was smoking his cigar complacently.

“Are there stories like that back of many public characters?” asked Mrs. Chambers.

“Back of some, I guess,” replied Jimmy with serious countenance.

“Tell some more,” urged Molly.

“Mention some man, and I may be able to.”

“I don’t know any public men—except you.”

“Oh, yes, you do. There’s Dennis.”

She made a little mouth of reproach. “But, really, I wish I did know some of those men. As it is I don’t know even where to look for them.”

“A good place to look for them,” returned Jimmy, half in earnest; “would be th’ National Convention of th’ party at Chicago next June.”

Molly turned a radiant face on her Uncle. "You *must* do it," she cried. "It's the very best idea in the world. You must make up a party, and take them in your car to Chicago. We'll go to the Convention, and see all the big men. But would they let us in?" she asked of Jimmy.

"I guess I could get tickets for you if Mr. Chambers decided to take you." Jimmy's face reflected some of her enthusiasm; her impetuosity captured him. "And I'll point out Dennis Mud to you—if he's there," he added.

"We'll see," temporized Mr. Chambers. "Perhaps, it could be managed. But we've got some months to get ready for it."

"Well, we're going," said Molly with an air of conviction that came of an accurate knowledge of her Uncle's indulgence and of the sway of her own coaxing tyranny.

"Wouldn't it be splendid?" she confided to Jack.

"Y-e-s," he answered. His unspoken criticism upon the proposed excursion was that it would take her out of town—where he could not see her.

She detected his hesitation. "Why, I should think you'd enjoy it as much as anybody," she exclaimed. "Wouldn't you like to see the Convention?"

"*Me?* Would *I* be along?"

"Of course," Then, determined that he should appreciate the proposed honor, "Yes, I *guess* you

would, and I don't know whether I'd ask Dick and Tom to go, or only one of them."

"Both of them. At least, I would ask them both," returned Jack. He was improving.

"I haven't made my party up yet," she retorted. "Besides, I suppose, the Convention would come at the wrong time for you. You told me you were always very busy in the Bank about June."

"Y-e-s, but—maybe—Jimmy could arrange it so that I could go."

"Perhaps," she agreed reluctantly. "I am sure that either Dick or Tom will manage to go, no matter what happens, if they're asked."

"Well, if Tom can, I can."

"Well, if he can't and you can't, I tell you what I'll do. I'll describe to you all that I saw and tell you what Dick and I did—when we come back. And I'll make Dick remember all that he sees, too."

Jack made up his mind that he would go to that Convention if he rode to Chicago on the brake-beam of Molly's car.

Mr. Chambers was inquiring what the feeling was generally with regard to the proposed candidacy of Grant for the Presidential nomination. "I suppose, Senator Mabie and Senator Corson will move heaven and earth to have him nominated," he remarked.

"So they say," concurred Jimmy.

"Corson is a great power," went on Mr. Cham-

bers, reflectively; he had in mind Joseph Gans's condemnation of the Senator. "I don't think many men in public life are so freely denounced as he. But he stands up under it all right. He must be a born leader and schemer."

"He is," returned Jimmy; and, after a moment, smiling, continued, "They tell a story of him that is to th' point. When he was six years old his father, who was a clergyman, one day brought home a toy sword and a Bible. He thought it was a good chance to discover what th' boy's leanings were. So he showed both th' sword and th' Bible to him, and said he might have his choice. Whichever he didn't take his sister, who was a few years older, was to have. Young Corson, they say, looked at both th' sword and th' Bible, reached out his hand toward th' sword, then said he'd choose th' Bible. His father was delighted, though he was surprised, too; for th' boy was all th' time playing soldier. It wasn't till his sister laughed at th' idea of her taking a sword that th' old gentleman concluded that his son knew a good deal for a boy of six."

"Some of the Senator's biographers made up that story, didn't they?" laughed Mrs. Chambers.

"I don't know," said Jimmy. "Th' Senator certainly started in early to show what he was made of. He's as full of ideas as a monkey of tricks. That reminds me of another story of him. When he was about twelve years old he was sitting in church

one day, and his father, th' pastor, didn't arrive on time. Th' minutes went by, and th' people began to get restless and look round. Then, all at once, young Corson got up, walked slowly to th' pulpit, and began to turn over th' leaves of th' big Bible there. Every once and a while he'd look at th' church calendar and order of service, and put a marker in th' book. People stared at him, but they all supposed he'd been told to do it. Nobody caught on till th' old gentleman came in, and looked so stern and surprised. Then there was a good bit of quiet laughing. But young Corson didn't mind that. He walked back to his seat, solemn as an owl. He felt responsible for th' old gentleman making them all wait, and he felt he'd done what he could to keep them interested and fill in th' time."

"You will have to make up that party for the Convention and take me with you," said Mrs. Chambers to her husband. "I want to see this Senator Corson and I want to see Mr. Devlin—when he's in the field."

Jimmy inclined his head and colored. A compliment from a woman was something new to him. "I'll be a mighty small frog in that puddle," he said. "But I do think th' Convention would interest you some. And now I must be going. I had no idea it was so late. It's nearly eleven o'clock."

He rose quickly, and Mrs. Chambers extended her hand. Jimmy took it, "I've had a *very* good time,"

he said. There was no doubting that he meant it. The hearty squeeze he gave his host's hand was convincing. Jack made his adieus, and went with him.

Jimmy didn't say much as they walked along. In fact there was small opportunity. What was there for him to say when Jack was with him, and they had just come from an evening spent in company of The Only Girl?

IT was "Jack" and "Molly" now. January, February and March are accounted austere months; to Jack they were the sunniest in his memory. So potent are the smiles of The Only Girl.

Dick Gans was out of town on a long business trip; Tom Rowell had met The Other Girl. Therefore, indulgent and galling rivalry and cousinly interest, scarcely less tormenting, for the three months named were no more than shadows which, when called into the present by some reminiscence of The Only Girl, were greeted with a tolerant remark and quickly relegated to a willingly-forgotten past by the young man for whose delectation they had been summoned. It may be that the acquiescence of The Only Girl in this somewhat summary treatment of her reminiscences had root in judicial consideration of the adage "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." It may be that comforting reflections upon the opportunities for reprisal which would be afforded her feminine privileges and weapons when Dick Gans returned to town and Tom Rowell was weaned from The Other Girl, encouraged complaisance. Nor is it impossible that her blue eyes had found new attraction in the knight who remained at

her side. Who can identify the motives of a young woman of twenty who has indubitable graces of person, a mind of her own and a heart that is in itself—a mystery?

Jack knew that he was happy, and that the streets were paved with air, especially those which connected his home with a substantial brown-stone fronted building in which was a square room, lined with book shelves and genially warmed by a big fire-place with which he was becoming more and more familiar. The outlines of this room he had often described to his mother; and she sometimes wished that she might meet the other person who, it seemed, sat perpetually there, but with regard to whose sayings and doings her informant became steadily more reticent. However, she felt that the time had not yet come for this meeting. She had learned enough from Jack and from Jimmy to satisfy her with what was. She was frank enough—if she had not been a mother it might be necessary to say unselfish enough—to acknowledge that it could do Jack's cause no good to introduce herself just now among these friends of his. In this she judged Mr. and Mrs. Chambers by a standard more worldly than it was fair to apply to them; but that was because she did not know them personally. As it was, she waited, calming her sometimes rebellious heart with thoughts of her boy's love for her and with prideful reflections on his outlook.

She hummed to herself over her sewing, and kept her mind steadily on what was ahead. It is true she was very lonely sometimes, but Jack never was allowed to guess that. It might have been that Jimmy would have guessed it, if he had seen her oftener. But Jimmy was up to his ears in work, and kept in touch with her only by infrequent and hasty calls and by the messages he sent by Jack. If there were other lines of communication between them, Kate was not certain of them, and Jimmy might have repudiated their existence.

So January, February and March passed—bathed in sunlight for Jack and, perhaps, for The Only Girl, too—tempered for Kate by joy in her boy's happiness—filled for Jimmy with the strenuous activities amid which he strove and thrived. That a great combat was impending—that a nation was to entrust its destinies to another man had interest only for the last named. On him it was thrust home by circumstances and by his plans with ever-growing directness and force.

Already politics, the country over, presented the appearance of a great kaleidoscope—a field of working, scheming, hurrying, betting men in whose mouths were little else than the words—"Grant," "Blaine," "Tilden," "Cincinnati," "Chicago," "State Conventions," "Delegates," "Third Term," "Popular vote," "results uncertain," and the names of every State in the Union and of thrice as many

political leaders. For, from the Pacific to the Atlantic seaboard, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, the country was in the throes of the Presidential election fever—a fever which had recurred earlier than was common and had already developed symptoms of alarming violence. Its throbbings were in the air. Business, even so soon, felt its pulses beat irregularly because of the contagion. In every city and village, in every stretch of ranch-dotted prairie and mountain settlement men were marshaling their forces for the first grand struggle—the nomination of candidates for the office of President.

In Jimmy's state the first skirmish had been fought. The State Convention of his party had been held; and, after a fierce rally, had chosen representatives to go to the National Convention. The vote of the Convention had stood 133 for Grant, 113 for Blaine upon the question as to who should be supported by the State delegation for the nomination. Senator Corson gave an interview in which he said, "This State will go for Ulysses S. Grant for Presidential nominee. If the delegation votes as it should—if the Unit Rule is upheld—it will be to give Grant the fifty-eight votes of this Commonwealth's representation. The opposition in this State, when the balloting at Chicago begins, will be unable to muster more than five or six votes for Blaine, in any event."

Jimmy read this, and smiled. But he was grimly

determined, though uncommunicative when questioned. Senator Mabie, the Chairman of the National Committee of the party saw him, and argued with him; Senator Corson did the same several times. The latter hinted, then openly referred to services performed in the interests of the Union Bank. But pleadings and arguments were of no avail. Jimmy's reply to Corson's allusions to the State deposits was, "Th' Union Bank is my concern; th' vote of representatives at Chicago is theirs. I can run th' Bank without th' deposits of th' State, as I once told you; I can't run th' people of this city in helping to choose a man for President. You said you wanted a majority to govern. We'll see at Chicago if that majority wants th' Unit Rule and Grant. *Your* vote, as delegate-at-large will go for Grant; mine won't. I told Senator Mabie this at Washington on January twenty-eighth. You can repeat it to him if he's forgot it. Rushing the State Convention ahead of time so as to cut out th' County Conventions that are against you and give th' County Committees that are for you a chance to name delegates for Grant will work in some places. It don't work in this city—while I'm about."

The Senator deliberately raised an eyebrow and half lifted a heavy eyelid. "This city isn't solid against Grant by a long shot," he remarked in his piping voice.

But Jimmy went on imperturbably. "Walsh had

an axe to grind when he made that deal with you. You'll grind it for him, I daresay. If *I* have any, I'll grind 'em myself. It's dangerous turning th' stone when Walsh holds th' axe—his hand's so liable to slip." His face was vacant.

But Senator Corson knew that this was an ultimatum. If his temper had not long before been bridled, he would have turned loose a hot tongue in reply. What he did was to compress his lips, droop his lids, and say drily, "Don't get cocky over Walsh or the Bank. And, as for the vote, you'll change your mind when you see how the tide runs for Grant at Chicago."

The developments of the two succeeding months tended to bear out this prediction. The "boom" for Grant gathered strength. Senator Mabie, when asked if anything could persuade him to change front, declared, "Those who know me best know that I never back." But elsewhere the anti-Grant feeling exhibited itself conspicuously. County after county in Jimmy's State repudiated the declaration of the delegates at the State Convention, and called for a fight against the rule providing that State Delegations should vote as a unit at the National Convention. On May third nineteen members of the New York delegation pledged themselves not to vote for "The Strong Man." On the thirty-first of the same month the anti-Grant forces from New York and from Jimmy's State held a caucus, and ratified

their pledges. Three days later Senator Mabie went to Chicago, and, as Chairman of the National Committee, began active work on the field of the coming battle.

On the same day Jimmy, hurrying his preparations for departure with the delegation of which he was recognized as the leader, had a visit from Marcus. "I want to go to Chicago," the latter announced; and, as if that statement was sufficient, waited.

Jimmy made no protest. This was a question of a few dollars. He sent out, purchased a round-trip ticket to Chicago, and handed it to Marcus. The latter pocketed it without thanks. "I may see you there," he said. "I hear Jack's going. I may drop in on him, too."

Jimmy made a mental note that, if he could prevent such a meeting, he would. But he did not mention Marcus's visit or his own intentions when he saw Kate that afternoon. "I'll keep an eye on th' boy," he said. "But I guess he won't have any eyes for me."

At six o'clock that evening, in company with the delegates from the city, he started for Chicago

* * * * *

Mr. Chambers's private car held a party of eight—Mrs. Chambers, and her husband; Molly; "The Other Girl," known to the world as Ellen Harper;

Maizie Bradford, Molly's "dearest friend"; Jack, Dick Gans, and Tom Rowell. Speeding westward, attached to an express train, it carried probably the lightest hearted party of all those who journeyed to Chicago in those hot days of the last of May and the first of June. Only one of the car's occupants gave token of serious thought, and his reproachful face cleared, as if by magic, when the name "Jack" fell from a certain saucy mouth, or a pair of dancing blue eyes singled him out for their target.

To the very last Jack had cherished a forlorn hope that a kind providence would prevent Dick Gans from going on the trip. But both Dick and Tom were on hand when the time came, and Jack almost wished that it was his chances of going which had been jeopardized when he heard Molly say, "Dick you don't know how glad I am you are along. I've got ever so many things to tell you."

To Jack's private ear Molly confided, "Now, you must be very nice to Maizie Bradford. Tom is so taken up with Ellen Harper you see, that *he* is hopeless."

Jack's education was so far advanced that he did not voice the question which instantly suggested itself, "But what's the matter with Dick Gans entertaining her?" Instead he replied, "She is a very jolly girl," and, presently, went over, and began to talk to Miss Bradford. Yet he brooded on Molly's

speech, and placed the inevitable, uncomfortable construction upon it. Moreover, he bored Miss Bradford, who was a pretty girl and a lively conversationalist, so that she sought refuge in the company of her hostess, while he remained alone, to brood some more, until he saw Dick Gans arise quickly and betake himself into the smoking car. The door had not closed on that gentleman's back when Jack dropped into the vacant wicker chair by Molly's side.

She had been gazing out of the window. Now she turned with a little start, and remarked, "Oh, it's you? I wondered if you remembered that I was in the party."

"If—? Why, I've been wanting to talk to you all along."

"Why, didn't you then?"

"I was with Miss Bradford. It wouldn't have been just polite would it?"

She lifted her chin airily. "Then, she is *not* there now?" She twisted her head, and seemed very much astonished to find that Miss Bradford's chair was empty. "So you came to me when she left you?" she said cuttingly. "You are very thoughtful."

Jack was nettled. "You told me yourself, you may remember, that I was——"

"To be nice to Maizie? I needn't have taken the trouble, it appears. I didn't suppose that you were so anxious to do it."

"I've been sitting there like a stupid owl all the time, and looking everywhere but at her."

"That was very rude," she said severely. Then, with fresh interest, "You don't think she noticed it?"

"She couldn't help it," he answered carelessly.

"Oh! I am *so* sorry."

"Sorry I was—looking over here?"

"No, sorry for Maizie, sorry that you didn't entertain her. You must go to her again, and make up for your inattention."

"When?"

"When? When—Dick comes back."

"I don't think I will," he replied stubbornly, "I prefer to sit here."

"Do you?" arching her eyebrows. She became interested in the landscape.

"Yes, I do. And, look here, Molly! Am I going to escort Miss Bradford *all* of this trip?"

"Did she say you might?"

"I haven't asked her, and I don't in——"

"You don't have to ask her, perhaps. She likes you, and I want you to like her."

"Why?"

"Because."

"Because why?"

"Because she's my dearest friend."

This was not conclusive to Jack. But he did not push along that line further; skirmishing makes

even the volunteer wary. "All right," he said, "then I'll do what I can to entertain her. She's coming back to her old seat now; she has a book. I'll go over and read to her." He spoke calmly, almost cheerfully.

Molly stole a look at his face, and found it inscrutable. Still gazing out of the window, she said judiciously, "I don't think she—cares to be read to. Besides, it's bad for the eyes to read in the cars."

"Suppose, then, that I get her to stop reading, and talk?"

"You said you were stupid when you talked to her before. She's my friend; I don't want her bored."

"No, that's so. But,"—hopefully,—“I might do better this time. Shall I try?"

"Yes," she said impatiently, and he started to rise. He had flung the challenge, and she taken it up; there could be no backing down for him now. But, when he was on his feet, she added without turning her head and in a voice that it did not seem possible he could hear, "I wonder what I shall do—all alone—by myself?"

Immediately he sat down again, but, apparently she still imagined that she was speaking solely for her own benefit; for she answered her question herself. "I know what. I'll send for Dick." She turned as she spoke, and saw Jack. "What? Are

you back again?" When he did not answer, she went on, "Well, it won't be long till Dick comes."

"I'll not wait on Dick's pleasure," he declared fiercely.

"But you will on *mine*?"

His resentment melted. "Yes, if you'll be—if you'll—Oh, you know what I mean!"

He tried to make her look at him, but she was gazing out of the window. "Molly;" he said. She pretended not to hear. "Molly!" he repeated.

Her face came about swiftly. "Did you speak to me?"

"Yes, I wanted to know if—you'll be—the way I want?"

"I'll try."

"Is it hard?"

"Not so—*very* hard."

"Then, you don't want me to escort Miss Bradford all the time?"

"Did I say so?"

"You intimated it."

"Well, I guess, I don't want you to—*all* the time."

"Half the time?"

"There are *three* girls in this party," she said.

"Then I'm to go the rounds? An equal division of my time to each girl? Is that it?"

"That's fair, don't you think so? You're *so* popular, you know."

He reddened, and muttered something. "Don't get angry," she warned. "You'll spoil your good looks."

He started to rise. "And, I think, Tom Rowell—would be willing to take your share of Ellen's company,—if you knew what to do with your time," she added with provoking slowness.

He looked at her doubtfully. "Do you mean that?" he asked.

"What?"

"That I can be with you—when?"

"With me?" Her eyes opened wide. "Why, yes, you can be with me, I guess. That is when I'm not—with Dick."

"Hang Dick!" he said savagely. She gave him a horrified glance. "Mr. Doran!" she exclaimed, and finished, "There's Dick now! I suppose, his cigar wasn't good."

"Did he leave *you* for a *cigar*?"

"Oh, no," she replied instantly. "I told him, I wanted to be—" Dick's approach cut short her explanation. He halted beside her chair, and said something about the smoking car being hot. He didn't look comfortable. But he made no move to sit down.

Suddenly, Molly said to Jack, "Oh, I forgot! Don't tell that to anyone."

"Wha—?" began Jack, then saw the frown leveled at him from beneath a mass of curls, and

laughed. "No, of course, not," he answered. To himself he said, "Now, what the dickens, is it I'm not to tell?"

Dick did not stay. He went over to where Maizie Bradford sat. Jack whispered to Molly, "I caught your frown just in time."

"Frown? Did I frown?"

"Yes, you did. Why was it?"

"Maybe it was my hair; it's always blowing in my face, and tickling me." She put up a slim hand, and patted her hair. It was in perfect order.

"But you said to me, 'don't tell?'" persisted Jack.

"Do you like my hair better done up this way, or low down?" she asked. She turned her profile to him that he might judge fairly. But her eyes remained on his. They glanced at him sideways. Her chin was lifted; a distracting curve of throat and neck rewarded Jack. One hand rested on the arm of the chair. The fingers curled, a rosy palm up-turned.

Suddenly, the world was whirling round Jack. He leaned forward—a critical attitude—and put out a hand—to steady himself. He was amazed to have it come in contact with a capital support in the form of the arm of her chair. He had to run his fingers along this to be sure that it was what it seemed to be; and found that it was all unyielding wicker-work.

But his fingers tingled nevertheless and his voice trembled as he said, "I like it better—down."

"And after I wore it this way because—because I liked it best!" she pouted. She patted her hair again with both hands, and dropped them on her lap.

"Oh, but that's the way I mean I like your hair—the way you have it," Jack corrected. "Wear it always that way."

"Why?"

"To please me."

"You conceited thing!"

"But you *will* wear it that way, won't you? I like your hair *so* much."

"Yes, my hair is my only good point. Now—my *nose*——"

"Is the prettiest could be."

She tip-tilted it—to judge for herself. "But it's a pug," she sighed. "And my *eyes*——"

"Let's see them?" begged Jack. She flashed on him a look which staggered him, and he exclaimed, "Your eyes! They're beautiful—and they're blue! And, oh, Molly——!" He stammered, then halted. There was no mistake; the whirling of the world had completely upset him.

But the surroundings of the car—as well as other things—were obvious to Molly. She bent forward swiftly. "Look! Do look at that old farmer and

that horse!" she cried. "It's running away!" Her nose was pressed against the window glass. Her back was turned on Jack. A sense of his environment, and, perhaps, of other things, returned to him. But he was not polite. He refused to give even a glance to the farmer and the horse of runaway inclinations.

Mrs. Chambers came over, and he gave her his chair, and went to get another for himself. As he passed Dick Gans he noted that the latter apparently was deep in a confidential conversation with Maizie Bradford. Wheeling about, he caught Molly's eyes fixed on the same couple. She didn't seem to be pleased for some reason; and, thereupon, Jack's face reflected her dissatisfaction, all of which was extremely unfair to the object of this displeasure, since he was only doing what Jack was glad to have him do and what Molly should have wished him to do in the case of her "dearest friend." It must have been this thought which reproached her as Jack came up; for she said to her mother, "Dick is always so nice to everybody. He doesn't especially care for Maizie, yet he's over there doing all that he can to make her think that he does."

The faintest of smiles touched Mrs. Chambers's lips, but she made no reply. She talked with the other two until the first call for dinner summoned them; and, when they arose, Jack realized that they

had been speaking a great deal about himself, and that Molly's part in the conversation had not been large. He wondered why it was that Mrs. Chambers always reminded him so much of his mother.

That evening the party gathered in a little circle, and Jack—who was next to Maizie Bradford—discovered that she was not bad company—under the circumstances. But Tom Rowell who occupied a chair near to The Other Girl, and Dick Gans who was between Mrs. Chambers and his host, apparently were less contented. Indeed, Dick, at nine o'clock, asked if he might be excused while he smoked a cigar, and stalked away, saying he would be back in half an hour.

Jack saw a tiny frown gather on Molly's forehead. She sat silent for a few minutes, then smothered a pretty, little yawn with a hand, and laughingly declared that she couldn't keep her eyes open another minute. Mr. and Mrs. Chambers confessed to the same weakness, and the circle broke up.

Tom and The Other Girl decided to take a look out of the observation end of the car. "To see that the track's all right behind us," as Tom explained to Jack, when the latter winked at him.

Jack was left alone with Molly who had lost her handkerchief and was hunting for it. He kneeled down, and found it for her. She thanked him, and held out her hand. "Good night, Jack," she said.

There is mischief in blue eyes under the shaded light of lamps, and Jack held her hand. "Good night, Molly," he said. Then, "Molly, why is it that you try to make me—miserable?"

"Why, Mr. Doran—!" she began. But the lips that were at the beginning of a little mouth of wonderment took it on themselves to droop, and their allies, the blue eyes, realizing that they were betrayed, wavered, then hid themselves. But, again, they could not resist a shy peep at the dark ones which had put them to confusion, and what they saw there made their owner say, "I don't know why I tease you; but it must be because you are so easy to tease, and because I like you, Jack."

"Oh, Molly!" he said, in breathless hurry to voice something which throbbed at his wrists and temples. "Go on teasing, if you want to—if you like me."

She drew away her hand, and twisted a little corner in her handkerchief. "And, Molly," he added; "don't you like me better than you did?"

"Yes."

"And you'll like me—better still?"

"I—I—hope so." Suddenly her eyes were raised again, this time from the handkerchief which she was still twisting. They were so tender and deep and a trifle uncertain!

Jack found himself pitying them, somehow. He

felt the tears start in his own, and was not ashamed. "I'm going to keep on trying to make you like me better—all the time," he said in a low voice. "You can't stop me doing that."

"I don't want to," she answered, and fled.

Jack stood where he was. Then he saw on the floor a bit of cambric with one corner tied in a tight little knot. He picked it up and hid it. He wouldn't have untied that knot for all the world.

THEY were standing on a balcony which ran along outside their windows on the third floor of the hotel. It was half past four o'clock of the day of their arrival in Chicago,—June the fourth. Below them, as far as they could see, the pavements were thick with men. Everyone was in a hurry. It was in the hotel section of the town, now a hive of activity, thrumming with the voices and movements of those who poured in and out of the headquarters of the various State Delegations. It was the third day of the big Convention—the third day of the greatest struggle between factions which has ever marked the selection of a Presidential nominee.

Mr. Chambers spoke to the rest of the party. “Do you see that building on the opposite side of the way, in the next block? The one hung with bunting?”

“I can see half a dozen with flags and signs on them,” answered Molly.

But Jack singled out the building, and pointed it to the rest. Dick Gans at once said, “That’s where the delegation from our state is. You can read the name over the door, if you look close.”

Molly exclaimed that she saw it. "I wonder if Jimmy's there—now?" she added.

"Very likely," said Mr. Chambers; "for it's one of the busiest places in the city to-day. The old state is playing a big part in this Convention."

"It's what they call a pivotal state, you see," explained Dick to Molly.

"That term applies only to an election," corrected Jack.

"It applies in this case, too," returned Dick. "Our state is the pivot of this Convention. It was our delegation that defeated the Unit Rule."

"Well, go ahead, Mr. Know-it-all!" Molly admonished, when he halted. "Explain the Unit Rule, sir!"

Tom Rowell also called for an explanation. Dick Gans smiled patronizingly. "It was a rule providing that every State Delegation should vote as a unit on the nomination," he said lazily.

"A fact that we knew already," commented Molly. "You are not going to get off with that lame explanation."

It happened that Mrs. Chambers had just asked a question about the Unit Rule, and her husband took up the explication. "The rule provided," he said, "that each delegation should vote unanimously on every question which was to be decided by vote in the Convention. It made no difference what a minority of the members of a delegation thought

on a question; the majority of the delegates in that delegation spoke for themselves and for the minority as well. Every vote in every delegation was to be cast as the majority of the delegation willed. There's been fighting in plenty over this rule before."

"It does n't seem to me to be a fair rule in a country like ours where every man is supposed to have his say," ventured Miss Bradford.

"That's what a lot of people in our state thought," amended Tom. "There was the biggest kind of a row over it at the State Convention."

"Now, Dick, explain," commanded Molly. "If you don't get rid of some of your superfluous information, you'll burst."

Tom and Jack exchanged glances of satisfaction. Dick Gans often was better informed than they on public questions, but he was also inclined to be supercilious. He did not show to advantage on the rack; and Molly was conversant with the tortures most distressing to him and delectable to others.

Dick understood his position, but he answered quickly enough, "The thing is really very simple. The Grant people wanted the Unit Rule, the rest didn't. So there was a row."

A peal of laughter greeted this primary lesson in cause and effect, and the speaker did not accept his humiliation with the proper grace, so Molly prodded him with the question, "Why did the Grant

people want the Unit Rule? That's what we wish to know."

Mr. Chambers intervened. "It wasn't absolutely clear at the start—at least not to outsiders—why the Grant people *did* want it. But it came out that Senator Mabie and others who were for Grant believed that, by making every delegation cast the full strength of its vote on one side or the other, Grant would be a gainer. It is said that Grant is favored by a majority of the members of enough delegations to secure for him the nomination, if the vote was by delegations, and not by individuals. But, with the delegations split up, the minorities make a formidable opposition to Grant. If they could be brought to agree upon a candidate, they would be able to elect him, perhaps."

"Our State is split up that way," supplemented Jack. "You know Jimmy is against both Senator Mabie and Senator Corson who are great Grant men."

"That is what I referred to when I said our State is playing such a big part in the Convention," resumed Mr. Chambers. "If our state had voted as one man, fifty-eight votes would have been given to Grant—enough to elect him, some say. But that particular issue is dead now. Hoar, the Permanent Chairman of the Convention refused to be bulldozed, and, practically, put the question of the Unit Rule before the Convention for settlement yesterday. The

Convention decided to give every man his vote, whether in a minority or not. That killed the Unit Rule. Moreover, it makes it unlikely that Mabie or anyone else will be able to persuade the minority in our delegation to join hands with the Grant people."

"No, they'll never persuade Jimmy," affirmed Jack heartily. "Jimmy's as stubborn as a mule, once he's made up his mind."

"That's my own idea," remarked Mr. Chambers. "And, if Devlin holds out, it means the toughest kind of a fight for the Grant crowd. They need his twenty odd votes. It will be a bitter pill for Senator Mabie to swallow after the boasts he's made."

"But Mabie and Corson are going to have their way in the end," declared Dick, wagging his head. "They are on the right side. Devlin represents but a few delegates, at best."

"You are a strong Grant man?"

"Yes, I am—the strongest kind. And I'm going to have the chance to vote for him for President, too."

He spoke with such an air of assurance that Molly's nose was elevated. She said to Jack aside, "You've got a vote this time. I want you to vote the other way."

"I will," he said, speaking up. "*My* vote goes for Blaine."

"Blaine will never be nominated," laughed Dick scornfully.

Mrs. Chambers smiled. "Why don't you both address the Convention?" she suggested. There was a general laugh. But neither Dick nor Jack weakened. "I wish Jimmy *would* speak in the Convention," said Molly, presently.

"Devlin is not a speaker," commented Dick with an air that implied that the said Devlin was not much of anything.

"But you'll let him speak for himself this time, won't you?" remarked some one back of them. It was Jimmy. He was neatly dressed and smooth shaven as usual, but there were weary lines about his restless, fever-burning eyes to dispute supremacy with his smile and blithe tones.

Mr. Chambers shook hands with him, and Mrs. Chambers presented him to the party. Jimmy bowed and shook hands with Molly. "How are you, old boy?" he asked, grabbing Jack's arm. Then he handed Mr. Chambers a bunch of tickets, strapped together. "There are th' cards of admission to th' Convention—one for each day?" he said. "I'm glad you took my advice and didn't come on earlier. It was very hot here. Mrs. Chambers, did you suffer much from th' heat?"

"No," she replied. "We had a car to ourselves, you know, and didn't have to stop on the road, as I hear that you had to do."

"Yes, we laid by, but we weren't in a great hurry to get here. We knew what we were running into. We have been busy enough since we came, though."

"Tell me all about it," demanded Molly. She threw him one of her dazzling smiles. Jack decided that Jimmy must be of cast-iron if he could withstand that.

But Jimmy only said, "What can I tell you? Th' newspapers know more than we do."

"Tell us about—Senator Corson and Senator Mabie. What are they doing?"

"Still working for Grant."

"But I thought you had had a fight with them, and won?"

"A fight? I haven't been doin' much fighting. I've been looking on and—'sawing wood.'"

The men laughed. Molly was dissatisfied. "I've read the newspapers, and tried to understand them; and the rest have just been explaining about that horrid Unit Rule; but I don't understand yet, Mr. Devlin. Now, you know all about it; won't you tell me just what they've done—since the Convention began?"

Jimmy whistled softly. "Now, I've put my foot in it!" he ejaculated. "Why, to tell you that would take me all night, and I wouldn't be through then."

"But tell me the important things—so that I'll know what's coming when we go to the Convention to-morrow."

Jimmy's face reflected his helplessness, but he said, presently, "All right; I'll do my best. On th' first day of th' Convention seven hundred and fifty odd delegates met, organized and selected Senator Hoar of Massachusetts for Permanent Chairman; and he appointed th' committees. Then they decided to admit to th' Convention all th' anti-Grant delegates."

"Good!" exclaimed Molly. She understood that this was a victory for Jimmy's side.

He smiled. "Yes, it *was* good. And yesterday they did better, when they abolished that 'horrid' Unit Rule."

"Does that mean that Blaine will be elected? I mean isn't that what the—Bosses think?"

"No," he replied with a gravity becoming this appeal to his professional confidence. "It doesn't even mean that Blaine will be nominated. But it is a big step in th' right direction. And, now, about—to-day? Let's see! At this morning's session th' Convention spent five hours in talking. This evening they're not likely to do much more. So I advise you to wait till to-morrow to go. Th' nomination speeches will most likely be made then."

"Now, I know it all, and I'm very much obliged," said Molly. "But what have *you* been doing? The truth, remember."

"*Me?*" echoed Jimmy. He shifted his feet, and mechanically began to button up his coat. "I haven't been doin' much—except 'sawing wood.'"

“Was it—‘sawing wood’ when you got those twenty-two men, day before yesterday, to sign that paper that they never, *never* would vote for Grant?” pursued Molly. It was one of the few things of which she had carried away a distinct impression from her reading of the newspapers.

Jimmy’s face lighted up. “Oh, that wasn’t much—so th’ other fellows say,” he protested, but his voice proclaimed that he was of a different opinion personally.

“But you won’t give in to them, will you?” This was for the especial instruction of Dick.

“*Give in?*” The muscles about Jimmy’s mouth tightened, his eyes grew earnest. “No, we won’t give in. There are twenty-five delegates from our state, behind me, who are goin’ to vote against Grant till the last horn blows. We are goin’ to nominate James G. Blaine for President—if it’s to be done.”

“There! I knew you were a speaker,” Molly cried. “And you *will* address the Convention, won’t you?”

Jimmy looked a trifle ashamed of his outburst. “No, no, I won’t speak,” he returned hastily. “I’m a worker, not a talker. But I’ll be at th’ Convention, and I’ll keep an eye out for you. I’ve got to go now. Good-bye, all!”

That evening Molly’s persuasions prevailed over

Mr. Chambers's fatigue, and the party, Mrs. Chambers excepted, threaded their way among the crowds on the streets, now and then listening to the curbstone orators.

The crowds were larger than during the afternoon. There were more onlookers abroad; the number of men wearing badges was smaller, most of them being at the Convention. Here and there a knot of listeners surrounded a vociferous and perspiring gentleman who, mounted on a box or convenient carriage block, hat and coat pushed back, banged one hand with a fist, and waved his arms. The blare of horns and the beat of drums drew streams of pedestrians in the wake of marching clubs. Some of these paraders were singing. To the tune of "Old Folks at Home," two hundred men kept time with the following words:

" Lo! in our Nation's glorious morning,
Young and free and fair;
Hark, to our patriot father's warning!
Sounding thro' the air.
Sainted spirits hover o'er us,
God sent from on high,
Pointing to yawning gulfs before us,
To the lee shore nigh."

Another party of three hundred or more sang to the air of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," the following:

“ We'll guard the law. Aye, let it stand.
Hurrah ! Hurrah !
A mighty rock for Freedom's land.
Hurrah ! Hurrah !
No third ! No fourth ! No other term !
Of Royalty the slightest germ.
The third term scheme the people
Do condemn.”

A third parade turned from a cross street as the party were making their way homeward. Secure on the steps of a nearby house they watched a hundred men go by. Tow Rowell declared that the paraders were from their own city. “ I saw them marching a few days before we left home,” he said. “ Look at their transparency ! ”

On the transparency was inscribed :

A Party without a Master,
A Candidate without a Stain.

“ A Grant club,” affirmed Dick.

“ Not a bit of it,” declared Tom. “ It's a Blaine club.”

“ It's the National Club—an anti-Grant Club from our city.” said Mr. Chambers. “ I remember them now.”

Molly pointed to the fat man who leaned far backward to balance the transparency which he bore. But Jack did not respond. Close to the last file of marching men in frock coats and silk hats, he saw a tall figure with something familiar in its carriage.

The man had a cigar in his mouth, one of his arms was linked in that of a companion. He lurched, now and then; he was laughing. Jack recognized his father, and he bent down, as if to tie his shoe. He did not straighten up until his father's figure was silhouetted against the glare of the torches. Then he gave a quick look at Molly. She was talking to Maizie Bradford; he drew a breath of relief.

Going back they stopped in front of one of the hotels over whose doorway were strips of painted canvas bearing the names of three states, indicating that the place was the headquarters of as many delegations. The hotel rotunda resembled a stock exchange on the day of a lively market. A noisy mob of men talked, gesticulated and smoked. Most of them were red and perspiring; each one seemed to be alive to his public responsibilities, and was desirous that onlookers should observe this. Messenger boys darted from the throng and were swallowed up in the crowds on the pavement.

Molly wanted to go into this hotel. She declared that the only way to appreciate a Convention was to see the whole thing. But her uncle promptly vetoed the proposition. "The crowds were too rough at night."

"Then I shall ask Jimmy to take me in the first chance—in the daytime," she declared. "I'm sure we'd hear who was going to be elected if we were in there."

Half an hour before the Convention opened on the following day, Mr. Chambers's party were in their places. They were in the second row of the seats reserved for ticket holders. From their position they could see the length and breadth of the building and commanded a fine view of the Speaker's stand.

Ten thousand people were in this hall which was a part of the huge exposition building. The galleries were packed. The summer gowns of the women touched with gay color the banks of sober-hued coats and white shirt fronts which rose on three sides of the building from the edge of the delegates' floor up to and under the galleries. The building was in the form of a vast ellipse. Around the columns and arches supporting the roof were twisted strips of bunting. The national colors draped transverse beams and doorways. Set around the walls, from which the roof trusses sprang, one hundred feet into the air, interspersed with the shields of the various states, were pictures of the Presidents and other distinguished men, festooned with flags, fastened with rosettes. A large portrait of Washington was in the middle; another of Lincoln faced the seat of the Chairman, surrounded with the inscription: "And the government of the people, for the people, by the people shall not perish from the earth." Palms and other growing plants filled in the niches and terraced the platforms.

Opposite the main entrance of the hall, on a raised

platform, was the Chairman's seat, back of him the seats of the National Committee, on either side those of the distinguished guests. Below spread the seats of the Delegates, fronted by the places occupied by the secretaries and reporters. A pole bearing a shield inscribed with the name of its state indicated the position of each delegation. Many of the delegates already had arrived, and were in their seats, or stood in the aisles, talking and laughing. These little groups were continually dissolving and forming anew. Fresh arrivals poured down the aisles, branching off, here and there, until the passage-way was clear. It was a great, animated picture, shifting its atoms every second, yet preserving its form and color always. Far above on the roof arches crept a few daring men who had climbed upon the roof outside and so made their way through the long windows into the building, escaping the watch of the ushers. The promise of a great fight was irresistible.

After their first swift look around the hall two pairs of eyes among those in Mr. Chambers's party searched for one and the same figure; and, for some time, did not find what they sought. Then Molly spied a short, gray-coated man mounting the steps to the Chairman's platform. He was shaking a hand here, nodding to a man there; once he used his curved fingers as a trumpet to send a message over a sea of heads to a friend across the hall.

"There he is! There's Jimmy!" she exclaimed,

in her excitement, grabbing Jack's arm. They both stared, and involuntarily cried, "Jimmy!" under their breath; then looked at each other, and laughed foolishly.

Jimmy reached the platform level, and went to the side of the Chairman. For several minutes these two talked together. Once the Chairman threw back his head and laughed. When Jimmy turned to descend the platform his watchers tried to attract his attention. They waved their fans frantically, not realizing that, among the thousands of fans and folded papers which moved ceaselessly, theirs were indistinguishable.

Nevertheless, they saw Jimmy pause, and gaze in their direction. Then he waved an arm, and they both waved back at him, and their signal was returned. "He said he'd see us, but I didn't believe it," said Molly.

"If he said he'd do anything, you can be sure he'd do it," replied Jack. "If he said he'd shove the Chairman out of that seat, and put you in it, he'd carry it out,—unless they tied him up first."

A scattering fire of hand-clapping and cheers turned their eyes upon the delegates' floor.

"What is it?" asked Maizie Bradford.

"It's Senator Mabie coming in," Mr. Chambers returned. "There he is now!" He pointed out a man of above middle height, stoutly built, with a large, reddish brown mustache and thick brown hair.

His big nose and the heavy lines of his jaw could be seen even at that distance. "Is *that* Senator Mabie?" said Molly scornfully. "Why, he looks like some—business man."

"Did you expect an ogre?" inquired Mr. Chambers. "However your description isn't bad. But don't forget—looks are deceptive. And there's Senator Corson. Right behind Mabie!" he added. They all strained their eyes, but got but a glimpse of Senator's Corson's squat figure before a knot of men gathered around him. Miss Harper declared that celebrities were disappointing.

Then the Chairman's gavel fell, and slowly the meeting came to order. What was said and done in the next few minutes was not easily understood by many spectators. The delegates were settling in their seats; there was much shuffling of feet, and a subsiding hum of conversation. Mr. Chambers pointed out two men seated near the Chairman. One of these was General Sheridan, of whom they could see little more than his head, as he sat back of another man. The second man was of slight frame. He was dressed in a lavender suit, and carried a switch cane with which he tapped his boot. He was inconspicuous in every way, and they were amazed to hear that he was Prince Leopold of England. While they were discussing him, a man suddenly walked to the front of the Speaker's pedestal; a hush instantly fell on the assemblage.

"It's th' first nomination speech," explained a man next to them. "It's Mr. Joy of Michigan. He'll nominate Blaine."

And so Mr. Joy did, and got his share of applause. But there seemed to be general disappointment over his address. Dick Gans was triumphant. "That's a fair sample of the men who will talk for Blaine," he said.

"It isn't all in the speech-making," retorted Molly. "People vote to elect a President. Anyway, we have yet to hear your great Grant orator."

Jack took up Mr. Joy's cudgels, and soon the entire party were drawn into the debate. Indeed the speech of the man who nominated Mr. Windom was almost unheard by them. But a burst of applause which grew louder and louder cut short the argument at last. Another man had taken his place on the Speaker's stand, and every eye was turned on him.

"Roscoe Conkling," said Mr. Chambers.

There was something in the figure of this man, something in his conscious pose, in the confident, almost vain poise of his head, as he swept his glance over the hall which marked him as a man of power. He seemed to say to them, "Here I am! Regard me!" He looked like a great actor in the moment before he delivers a period which he knows will stir his audience.

Molly breathed softly, but so that the rest heard

her, "He reminds me of a cavalier—of some old court."

The characterization was not inapt. Tall, broad-shouldered, his body tapering to flat hips and long, firm legs, Conkling stood squarely and gracefully. His head was thrown back a little. The lines of his face resembled a cameo. The high forehead on which lay a lock of hair, curling from the rather scanty brown of the crown, the strong, large nose, the carven lips, carried into jutting prominence by a trim beard of yellowed brown, flecked with gray—all these stood out in bold relief. The steely glint of his eyes pierced his watchers. So imposing and magnetic was his front, for all of its theatrical suggestion, that the applause which had greeted his appearance was redoubled ere he opened his lips.

Then his arm was upraised, silence chained the vast hall; and the thousands hearkened to such a speech as few of them had ever heard. As the minutes sped by the words came from his lips, without hesitation, but with many a dramatic pause. They poured out, not as a torrent; but, now as a silvery stream, now as a strong-running river, now in the rumbling organ notes of a mighty cataract, each one distinct, measured, resonant, musical; modulated to the feeling of the speaker, keyed to a pitch of intensity, to pathos, or sarcasm, to recollection of noble deeds and declarations, to acts of mercy and promises of achievement as splendid and inspiring as any. His utterances were

polished, bitter, and enthusiastic. They stung with their vindictive lashing; they burned with the ardor of a cause. And Grant! Grant! Grant was the name which he linked always with his exordiums, appeals, commands. Blaine was the target of his attacks, open and covert. It was Grant's name with which he conjured, but it was the tide of his own eloquence which bore him along and carried his listeners with him amid the scenes he pictured, into fields of strenuous life and glorious deeds, until enthusiasm burst all bonds. Again and again they rose, and drowned his voice in a roar of cries and beating feet and hands, and made him wait.

When he had finished,—quivering, glowing, masterful, his eagle eyes flashing in exultation,—the thousands were on their feet, and made the building shake with a storm of applause. A sea of flags, handkerchiefs, fans, hats beat the air. To the ear and eye it seemed as if nowhere in all that vast hall there remained a tongue that was silent, an arm that was not upraised in celebration of the magnificence of those utterances.

But there *were* such silent tongues and inert arms, and they were to be counted by the hundreds. The anti-Grant men, whether they were for Blaine or for some chieftain unnamed, for the most part, sat grim and unresponsive. Their ears were not yet done with drinking in the oratory which had just flooded the building, but their hearts were sore because of this

triumph, and their brains were busy with plans to counteract its effects. Soon, all over the floor where the delegates sat, were men hurrying from seat to seat. A score of whispered consultations betokened the apprehension created by Conkling's impassioned and insinuating address.

Molly and Jack and the rest of that little group sat spell-bound for a moment after the wild outburst of cheers and wavings had exhausted itself. They understood only a part of what had been said, but their heads still rang and their hearts throbbed with the melody of the speaker's voice. Then Molly turned to Dick. "Oh, he was magnificent!" she said. "If he was *only* on our side!"

It was the most flattering of concessions, and Dick replied, "He was grand! I wish he was for Blaine, if he wasn't for Grant."

"I guess, Grant will win," Molly confided to Jack. "He couldn't help it—after that."

"It looks as if he must," admitted Jack. "Perhaps, though, they may forget Conkling's speech by the time they vote."

"No, no, they *can't* forget it," she returned. "Nobody possibly could." She turned to her uncle who was explaining some of the allusions Conkling had made.

Then another man came forward to speak, and they learned that it was Garfield. With the picture of Conkling's gallant pose fresh in mind, the tall,

strong figure and fine head of this Ohio man were unimpressive. He had a sensible face; and his large, bright eyes, prominent nose and full cheeks, framed in a brown beard, tinged with gray gave a Germanic cast to his countenance which was comfortable and resolute, but not inspiring. And, when he began speaking in a clear, sincere voice, he gained the respectful attention of his audience; but, except among those who realized the adroitness of his utterances and the sanity of his thought, and knew that he stood in a position of vital import to every delegate whether for or against Grant—except among these he failed to gain the consideration for his address to which its strength and cogency and the logic of the situation entitled to it. Yet everyone who listened with an ear sensitive to warning notes and with a mind alive to the uncertainties of the impending struggle—weighed those final, portentous words which fell from his lips,—as they afterward remembered, with almost the magic of prophecy.

“I have seen,” he said, “the sea lashed in its fury and tossed with spray, and then rise to a grandeur that moved the soul of a man who looked upon it; but, I remembered, that it is the calm level of the sea from which all heights and depths are measured. When the hour of calm settles on the ocean, when the sunlight bathes it, then the astronomer and surveyor place the level and measure all terrestrial heights and depths.” And, gentlemen of this convention,



when the fervor of our enthusiasm has passed, when the passion of the moment has subsided, it is that calm level of public opinion below the enthusiasm, below the passion, from which the great thoughts of a mighty people are to be measured, and by which they are to be judged."

As Garfield ceased speaking it was as if the great concourse before him, for an instant, was restrained by the echo of his sober truths. There was a pause—it might have been the calm he spoke of—then they rose, and paid to him the tribute, deserved by his thought and skill and by the name of Sherman whom he nominated.

"Mr. Devlin," said Molly that evening—Jimmy had come in immediately after dinner—"Why didn't you get Mr. Conkling to make your speech?"

"Th' speech, you mean, for Mr. Blaine? Well, do you know, I didn't even think of asking him. General Grant got him first, anyhow."

Molly was abashed for a moment by the laugh which followed, but then she went on, "Of course, I know that Mr. Conkling wouldn't have spoken for anyone but Grant. I only meant that you should have had some one make a speech like his—for Mr. Blaine. Even Mr. Garfield spoke better than that Mr.—Mr.——"

"Joy? Yes, Garfield did make a good speech. Do you know, I liked Garfield's speech best of all."

"Why?" asked Mrs. Chambers.

“Well, I can’t say exactly. But it seemed to strike just th’ right note. There’s—lots of reasons—why. But—I won’t prophesy. Only this Grant and Blaine fight is going to be th’ hottest yet, and th’ man who talks like Garfield does——” He halted suddenly. “There’s such a thing as a dark horse,” he finished.

“You mean that Mr. Garfield might be nominated?” put in Molly. “Why, he isn’t even——”

“I don’t say anything,” he interrupted, with the air of one who fears he will say too much. “It’s too early in th’ day. And don’t say that I mentioned Garfield. It might get me into trouble.”

At that moment there was a knock, and Jimmy, who was nearest to the door, opened it. A waiter held out a silver tray; on it was a visiting card. “Mr. Doran,” said the waiter.

Jimmy’s eyes had fallen on the card. He picked it up, said “All right,” to the waiter, closed the door behind the latter, and laughed. “That trick didn’t work,” he said hastily. “I told ’em downstairs that, if anyone wanted me, I would be in Jack’s room, and to send any message for me to ‘Mr. Doran.’ It was meant to be a joke on Jack, but it’s turned out one on me. Jack’s in th’ writing room, isn’t he? Yes? Well, excuse me a minute, please. Some one’s come to see me.” He opened the door, and passed out.

But, almost on the threshold stood the man who

had sent up his card. He had followed on the waiter's heels, fearing some rebuff. It was Marcus Doran. His face wore a smooth smile. "Just in time to have you introduce me to your—to Jack's friends," he remarked.

Jimmy was twisting the card in his fingers. Out of the tail of his eye he saw Mr. Chambers and Molly looking at them through the open doorway. Marcus saw them, too, and took a step forward. He was bent on mischief, Jimmy saw that. Suddenly he grasped Marcus's hand, and said aloud, "Glad to see you! Come in, and let me present you to my friends." In a whisper he added, "Twenty dollars if you'll be Brown of my ward, and say *nothing!*"

"I'll take fifty," whispered Marcus in return, and stepped into the room.

"All right," said Jimmy softly, and went on aloud, turning to Mr. Chambers, "I want to make you known to Mr. George Brown, one of my delegation. He's just brought me a message, and has got to go on at once.

Marcus played his part well. He bowed, and said something to Mr. Chambers. He ran his eye around the room. His glance rested for an instant on Molly. A shade of disappointment betrayed that he had expected to come face to face with Jack. Then Jimmy said, "Well, Brown, I guess you'll have to hustle right off. I'll go down to the door with you," and Marcus knew this was the signal to go, and

made his exit a little reluctantly. Jimmy followed him.

When the door had closed behind them Jimmy pulled out a roll of bills. He gave Marcus two twenty dollar notes and a ten. "Now," he said, "Go! And, if you let it out that you're Jack's father, or try to meet those people—*something 'll happen*. There's a crowd of toughs in this town; lots of accidents could happen to you for less than you've just got from me."

Marcus scowled and contrived a laugh. But it had an empty sound. To be sure he had fifty dollars in his hand, but he also had a realizing sense of what was meant by the expression on the other's face. Jimmy was in a corner, and Marcus knew that Jimmy in a corner was not to be defied. He went out of the hotel, Jimmy returned to the room.

A few minutes later Jack entered, and Molly told him of the man they had just met. "I didn't much like his looks," she said in a whisper, "And it was *so* funny for Mr. Devlin to bring him in and introduce him in that way." She described the visitor, asking him if he had ever seen him.

The color left Jack's cheeks, and he stammered, "I'm not sure, but I guess,"—Suddenly, an impulse, born of shame of his own weakness, made him lift his head, and begin, in a louder voice, "Yes, I know him. He is——"

Jimmy's voice broke in. "Of course, you know him, Jack. You've seen him often enough. It was George Brown—of my ward." His eyes were fixed on Jack. They forbade him to speak. The latter's confusion returned to him. He hesitated, and the moment for speaking was gone. Jimmy said over his shoulder, "Jack, go up to your room, and get that letter I wanted to see."

"Jack doesn't approve of some of my acquaintances," he explained when the former had left the room. "You noticed how mixed up he was just now?"

"Yes," replied Molly slowly. "I didn't care much for that Mr. Brown myself; but I don't think he ought to be ashamed of your friends. A politician has to know all sorts of people."

"Yes," said Jimmy; "and some of them aren't what he'd choose. But he doesn't like to offend them. You understand. So, please don't say anything to Jack about that man Brown. It'd only work him up."

"No, I won't," she answered. But she did not appear to be entirely satisfied, and, for the first and only time, Jimmy anathematized those bright, blue eyes.

When the fifth day of the Convention opened it was freely predicted by those who should have known that Grant would be nominated before a

dozen ballots were taken. It was argued that the large, steady vote which "The Strong Man" was known to have pledged to his cause would resist all attacks and would be untouched by the desertions which would weaken the ranks of the opposition as a result of a failure to nominate a man at an early hour. The opposition to Grant was divided, and, in every case but one, supported men whose chance of being nominated was apparently too slight to sustain long the hopes of followers.

On the other hand, the Blaine people argued that their allegiance was fully as determined as that of the partisans of Grant; and that, besides, there was a personal antipathy to Grant, which, coupled with the prejudice against a third term, would effectually prevent any alliance of the smaller factions with the General's advocates. Aged Hannibal Hamlin was quoted as saying, "Grant's followers are boastful; I believe we hold the cards."

So it happened that, when Mr. Chambers and his party left the Convention on June sixth, twenty-eight ballots had been taken for a Presidential nominee; and the Grant and Blaine forces still locked horns. The final ballot was 307 for Grant; 279 for Blaine. The other candidates had had but slight support; Garfield bringing up the rear with a complimentary vote or two.

Molly chaffed Jimmy when they saw him for a minute after the Convention adjourned for the day.

“Poor Mr. Garfield!” she said. “He only had two friends.”

Jimmy wagged his head. “It doesn’t look like Garfield now,” he admitted. “But it doesn’t look like Blaine either,” he added with mock melancholy.

“They certainly haven’t made much progress,” remarked Mr. Chambers.

“‘More haste, less speed,’” quoted Jimmy, and went on, “But a night of thinking often works wonders. It will be somebody to-morrow—I feel it in my bones. *We* mean that it shall be Blaine.”

“And, if not him, then—Mr. Garfield?” interrogated Molly.

“Garfield—or somebody else,” said Jimmy, slipping out of the trap without appearing to notice it. He winked with the air of imparting a tremendous secret.

That night Jimmy was one of those at a small meeting of the Blaine leaders in a hotel room. At this meeting many possibilities were discussed. The Massachusetts delegation was said to be ready to make a bolt, if any likely third candidate should come out of obscurity. Two other delegations, it was rumored, were of similar inclinations. The Blaine leaders decided to hold to their candidate; but in extremity, to take advantage of any chance which should arise to head off Grant, even if they were forced to abandon their own man in so doing.

Six ballots had been taken on the next day when this chance came. On the horizon suddenly loomed a third figure beside the figures of Grant and Blaine—a figure that waxed from a mere pigmy to a man, and then to a giant whose bulk made the Grant and Blaine ranks tremble—a figure that rushed to the fore with great strides and, finally, made a panic of what had been a stubborn, almost monotonous fight. This figure sprang from that level of calm thought to which a certain orator had referred, three days before. It was the figure of the orator himself—James Abram Garfield.

On the thirty-fourth ballot Wisconsin gave to Garfield sixteen votes, and there was a breathless pause. But there the change ended for that ballot; and men's hearts beat regularly once more. It was not until the thirty-sixth ballot that the landslide fairly started. On that ballot Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado and California had voted, and it was Connecticut's turn. Then came the announcement,

“Eleven for Garfield!”

A tremor ran through the rows of seated delegates and stirred the thousands of spectators. The hall was hushed; men caught their breath, and watched; fluttering fans came to an abrupt pause. Men who were walking froze in their tracks. The break had started—the race was on between the Ohioan and his two great rivals.

Indiana's chairman arose, and declared,

“Ten for Garfield!”

Instantly the hush was broken. Ten thousand men and women were on their feet, many of them knowing not why. The roar of voices beat on the roof and sides of the building, and was flung back again upon its sponsors to deafen them and be sent forth redoubled in volume and frenzy. Then came a lull to hear Iowa's vote. And when the chairman's voice rang out, “Iowa twenty-two for Garfield!” again and mightier, reverberated the bellowing chorus of shouts and whistles and stamping feet and smitten hands.

But it was not all noisy demonstration. Down among the delegates Jimmy had sprung to his feet, and was bending over the Chairman of the Maine delegation. “Now's th' time to defeat Grant!” he cried in the other's ear. “Are you with us?”

There was a hurried consultation of the Maine delegates, and Jimmy ran back to his seat. As he reached it a tall man pressed to his side. He was a New Yorker; he asked Jimmy a question. “We are twenty-one strong for Garfield. You had better fall in line,” was Jimmy's quick reply. The New Yorker nodded, and sped back to his delegation.

Then fell another silence on the audience to hear the votes proclaimed; and, in swift succession, Maine, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania declared for Garfield, in part or whole, after each announcement bursting forth anew the united yells

of those thousands, now almost crazed by the growth of this great movement.

Banners from all sides flung a canopy over the sober, bearded man who, while every echo caught up his name, sat as one among his fellow men, apparently unmoved except for the flashing of his wide-open eyes and the tremor of the hands which rested on his knees. Then, full and strong rose the old Grant song "We'll rally round the Flag, Boys"; and, hardly had its last notes died, when, from where the band was stationed, clashed from brass and drum the strains of "See, the Conquering Hero Comes!"

For twenty minutes drum and brass strove to make themselves heard above the storms of applause. Men yelled and stamped; women clapped and laughed, and some wept. Everywhere above the heads of the delegates tossed banners and waving arms and high-flung hats. When it was all over, besieged by scores of hands that would grasp his, or, at least, touch his coat, James A. Garfield stood up—the nominee of his party for President by 399 votes of the 755 cast. Grant's faithful 306 stood by him to the last—the remaining honor to the vanquished.

As Mr. Chambers's party made their way slowly out of the struggling crowd of spectators Jack remarked, "Jimmy as much as told us that Garfield would be nominated."

"Yes," returned Molly. "He must have known that Blaine would be defeated. He said what he did,

I suppose, just to make it seem that he wasn't disappointed. Poor Jimmy!"

But Jimmy did not look disconsolate when, at five o'clock that afternoon, he got on a car with his delegation to start homeward. Blaine had lost, to be sure; but Grant had been defeated, too. And, what was more than all else to Jimmy, he had asserted his domination. Corson and Mabie had failed to crush him. What share his State had had in Garfield's victory belonged in fact to "J. Devlin—Boss."

"Curse him!" snapped Senator Corson that night. "If it hadn't been for Devlin, I believe, we'd have put through Grant at the start. We'll have to swallow him for a while—as long as he's on top. But when I get the chance to pay him for this—I'll make him remember my name and this day."



BOOK
• THREE •



“**I**’M going into politics!” Marcus Doran had laid his hat on Jimmy’s desk in “Back,” and drawn up a chair.

Jimmy sat behind the desk, a dash more of gray at the temples, a few more lines in the net-work at the corners of his eyes, a trifle more stocky of body, otherwise, the soberly-garbed, clean-shaven, alert Jimmy who, two years before, had helped to defeat Grant for the Presidential nomination. He gave a start at Marcus’s statement, shot a look into the latter’s face, and comprehended enough to prepare him for a bigger demand than any yet. But he made no reply, merely closing his hands under the edge of the desk.

“I’m going into politics!” again said Marcus.

“Yes, what is it?” demanded Jimmy.

“Councilman!”

For an instant Jimmy was sure that he could not have heard aright. Then he laughed; the humor of the proposition was irresistible.

“Laugh if you’ve a mind to,” remarked Marcus testily. “When you get over your fit I’ll go on. I’m glad you think it’s funny. I was afraid you might take it hard,” he added sarcastically.

Jimmy was sobered, not by Marcus's words, but by a sense of his own impotence. He leaned forward. "Whatever I think," he said; "You're a fool to come to me with such an idea. That's all there is to it."

"Not by a long shot. It's only th' beginning. I'm going into Councils, and you're going to put me there."

"Am I?" said Jimmy doggedly.

"Yes, you are, aren't you? Tell me, if you ain't. For, *then*, I'll have something else to attend to; and quick."

For a minute the two men looked at each other in silence. Marcus was enjoying what he knew was passing in Jimmy's head, for all of those unwinking, blue eyes.

Jimmy was going over the old struggle with himself; at first trying not to listen to his heart's voice, then listening to nothing else. He had ceased to speculate upon the audacity and relentlessness of the man in front of him. He was almost appalled by his own helplessness. Yet his mind was busy, all the while, trying to discover a way to escape. He foresaw in this what would be worse than a humiliation. Here, instinct told him, was something that menaced his welfare.

"Marcus Doran," he said; "what you ask for I can't give. There is but one place to be filled at this election by a new man—Murray's."

“That’s th’ place I want. Murray told me he was going to retire—he comes from my ward.”

Jimmy saw things more definitely now. “He put you up to this,” he declared. “I understand. But he didn’t tell you that he had to retire, did he? He didn’t tell you that he made his place too hot to hold him—that th’ Citizens League and every independent voter demands a man for his seat in Councils who will have clean hands?”

“No, but I don’t need to know that. What I want is th’ nomination for th’ place.”

“Which I can’t give you. I will tell you this—it may convince you: I’ve promised Gans of th’ League not to put up a man like Murray for that place. And you know, I keep my word.”

“That was before you had promised to give me th’ place,” said Marcus evenly.

“But I haven’t promised you.”

“It’s th’ same thing. You made up your mind to give me whatever I asked for—long ago. Anyway, you’d rather have that gang of reformers down on you than me; now, wouldn’t you?”

Jimmy’s eyes dilated, then the pupils became mere points. But he said quietly, “I couldn’t elect you, if you were nominated.”

“You can *now*,” with a pretence of reasoning which was like the play of the cat with the mouse. “Two years ago, with Walsh and Showell against you, you’d have had some trouble. But you shook

hands with them six months ago. It's th' Three Czars again—which is lucky for me. All you have to do is to say th' word and stick to it. Th' reformers can raise a row and make you hustle; but your man—that's me, you know—will go into Councils, just th' same."

It was the situation on its face. Jimmy leaned back in his chair, and thought. He had felt almost sure at the start that it was a waste of time to explain difficulties. Marcus did not know that there were influences at work which threatened the domination of the Three Czars; he would not care, if he was told. It was nothing to him that the reform movement was slowly but surely making headway, and that Jimmy's concession in the matter of a candidate for Con Murray's seat in City Councils was only one of several compromises which he was making or about to make with the aim of silencing public clamor against his dictation. It would not dissuade him to learn that Jimmy's political safety depended on appeasing the reformers and dividing their leaders while they were yet without a thorough organization and a popular battle-cry. These would be but abstractions to this man whose slouching figure, shifty eyes, puffy lids, fleshy nose and loose lips told of a life as gross as it was selfish. The single fact which had weight with him was: He wanted Murray's place which Jimmy could give to him.

Through Jimmy's brain flashed in quick succession the probable consequences of compliance with this demand. Marcus and Murray hand-in-glove, the first more knave than the other, less omnivorous in his appetite, but likely, under the circumstances, to be more unscrupulous and more dangerous. Gans and his people angered by this new outrage to a pitch compared to which their indignation of the present was something to be laughed at. Marcus, secure in his position because his sponsor was helpless. The outlook fairly made him gasp. "You fool!" he cried, unable to repress his rage.

Marcus passed over the epithet. "Am I to have th' place?" he returned steadily. He began to whistle.

In an outburst of anger Jimmy struck the desk violently. "I'll see you damned first!" he shouted.

"Then that's got to happen between now and next November," returned Marcus. "For I'll have Murray's seat or none. And, now that I think of it, ten thousand a year, until I say I've had enough is my price to withdraw as a candidate."

Jimmy had regained command of himself. His eyes narrowed. If Marcus had been any less secure in his position he would have quailed beneath the cold fire that shone from beneath those lowered lids. As it was he began to inspect his finger nails with an appearance of unconcern.

Jimmy watched him; and, when he spoke, it was

with a knowledge that he must surrender. To begin to bribe him with money was to open the door to endless and ever-increasing calls from which no plan or accident but death, could relieve him. Murray's seat in Councils was the alternative. Bad as this alternative was, it seemed the choice of evils. Something might happen to restrain or cripple Marcus as a Councilman.

"If this place was yours, what would you do in it?" he asked.

Marcus laughed. "What do you think?" he returned. "See that I got all that was coming to me, and—yes—and come and get orders, like th' rest, from my boss." Alluding to Jimmy as his "boss" tickled Marcus. He laughed again.

But Jimmy's face was stolid. "Then you may as well know now that there'll be th' biggest fight yet if your name's put up," he said. "I can have you nominated—perhaps; that's all. Gans and th' Citizens' League 'll never rest till they down you. You want to succeed a man who made his place too hot to hold him—a man worth a dozen like you. And th' people that's against him, if they don't know it already, 'll soon find that out. They'll be against you; can't you see that?"

"My election ain't worrying *me*," replied Marcus. "I'll leave everything to you. I know *you'd* hate to see me—disappointed"

Jimmy leaned back, and fixed the other with his gaze. "Marcus Doran," he said in a level voice, "You're a dirty coward—as low a hound as I guess there'll ever be. Some day I'll get th' chance to treat you like th' cur you are. When I do—as there's a God above me! I'll make you wish hell had opened up for you before you ever met me. Now, get out of here! Get out before I forget something and close my fingers on your throat! I'll give you th' answer you want at th' end of th' week. And you—if you care to have that place, keep your mouth shut—tight!"

Marcus's sallow face was triumphant. "I knew you'd do what I asked," he remarked.

On Tuesday afternoon of the week following he got his answer from Jimmy. Jimmy promised him the nomination, and added that he would be defeated at the polls. But Marcus was little troubled by the prophecy. It was an empty threat, he said to himself. The nomination would never have been promised if Jimmy had not arranged that he should be elected.

Nor did any one know this better than Jimmy. For six days he had plotted and devised expedients only to cast them aside; for six nights he had given his brain no rest but that which exhaustion compelled. There was no subterfuge, no bait, no threat which his fertile brain suggested that his knowledge

of Marcus's character and his understanding of his own position did not make him discard as worse than useless. So he surrendered.

Marcus went from his presence the words still ringing in his ears, "Keep your mouth shut about this or you'll be done for!" And the first thing he did, thereafter, was to hunt up Con Murray, and tell him of the result of his demand; and the second thing he did was to get very drunk.

Could Jimmy have foreseen the fruit of this last folly it is certain that Marcus would have spent the twenty-four hours immediately succeeding in a cell at the nearest station house. If Marcus had been less intoxicated by his latest success, it is likely that his other intoxication would have been less disastrous. As the thing fell out, swaggering along the street that evening, he encountered Gans whom he knew by sight and reputation, and was seized with a fit of drunken braggadocio. He stepped in front of Gans, and laid a hand on the latter's arm.

"Misher Gans! Misher Gans!" he said; "Misher Gans, you're very shly. But I'm shly, too; and I'm goin' t' be a Counshilman. Me an' Murray fixshed 't all up, and Jimmy shays ish all right. But don't tell anybody. Don't tell anybody."

Gans threw off the hand that detained him, and regarded Marcus with mixed disgust and incredulity. Marcus stood wagging his head, and repeating, "But don't tell anybody. Ish a secret, a secret."

Then Gans turned and walked on. But Marcus's words continued to sound in his ears; and, the longer he thought on them, the more persistent became the suspicion that they were not mere drunken babble. The next morning he called on Jimmy with a question; and what followed was said in few words, but those words very much to the point.

That evening there was a hurriedly called meeting of the Citizens' League, and the next afternoon an interview in the open air. This took place on the steps of the Colonial Club, the best known of the semi-political clubs; and was, so some public commentators assert, the immediate cause of an upheaval which changed the entire political aspect of a municipality.

Be that as it may, Jimmy in that interview forgot his caution and acted on impulse; and the effect was remarkable.

He was mounting the steps of the club when he heard his name spoken, and turned. A foot below him a man had halted. He was of slender build, with a vivid complexion and wore an imperial and had snapping eyes. Jimmy recognized him at once for Thomas Claghorn, a wealthy lawyer and an officer of the Citizens' League,— a man with a reputation for fearlessness and a biting tongue.

Jimmy asked Claghorn if he had called him.

"Yes, I did," answered Claghorn; and, looking Jimmy straight in the face, went on slowly and dis-

tinctly, "James Devlin, I've heard that your word was as good as your bond; and, until I gave that statement a trial, I was ready to believe that it might be so." He paused as if to let the words sink in.

Jimmy was standing at ease, his arms hanging loosely at his sides, a smile on his lips. He expected a caustic comment; but Claghorn's introductory remark was a little too sharp; and his smile hardened. Half a dozen men had come up, seeing that something unpleasant was on.

"I said I believed that you spoke the truth until I put your word to the test," repeated Claghorn in a clear voice. "But we've tried you on this business of a Councilman; and now I want to tell you that the story of your truthfulness came from those who were afraid of you,—and I'm not one of them. James Devlin, you're a liar!"

Jimmy's figure became tense, his head went back with a jerk. It was as if he had got a blow in the face. The next instant he leaned forward, and struck Claghorn across the mouth.

The blow knocked him down, and Jimmy looked at him a moment, then turned, and walked slowly down the steps and up the street without a backward glance.

Claghorn was helped to his feet, white and almost speechless with rage. He passed quickly into the Club; and there, the incident itself was closed.

But the blow was like a spark to dry prairie

grass. In twenty-four hours the tale of it was in everyone's mouth. The city rang with exaggerations of the encounter. Wavering allegiance to Jimmy, in many cases was changed to opposition; opposition to enmity; enmity to an open declaration of war. It was as if every political reformer had been struck in the face. The reform organizations were stiffened and galvanized into an activity such as never before had been known. And the supreme manifestation of this was the birth of the famous "Committee of Fifty."

THE encounter on the steps of the Colonial Club was fully described in the newspapers. Jack, on his way down town in the street-car the next morning, came upon this heading on the first page of his paper:

CALLED DEVLIN A LIAR!!

**Lawyer Thomas Claghorn Knocked
Down by J. Devlin—Boss on the
Steps of the Colonial Club!!**

FIGHT OVER COUNCILMANIC CANDIDATE!!

**The "Three Czars" Go Back on Their Promise
to the Citizens' League and Prepare to Put
Another Rascal in Con Murray's Place!!**

MARCUS DORAN IS HIS NAME!!

The paper shook in Jack's hands. He first thought that this was a political canard. The idea of Jimmy striking anyone in itself was almost incredible. That his father was a candidate for City

Councils astounded him. But the miserable truth was patent when he had read the column of description and interviews. Jimmy had refused to be interviewed. Claghorn had made a brief statement. The story showed conclusively that the lie had been given and the blow struck solely because Jimmy had changed his mind and decided to give a seat in Councils to—Jack repeated to himself, “to my father.”

All that day he asked himself questions which he could not answer. Why had Jimmy taken up his father as a candidate? They were not friends; Jimmy could gain nothing by it. It had aroused tremendous opposition. It had brought shame on his mother and himself. If he had trusted Jimmy less he would have felt bitterly toward him. He would have asked him for facts, but Jimmy was grimly silent and made no allusion to the subject.

Neither did Jack speak to his mother of what he had read. At the supper-table they both talked rapidly. He noticed her regarding him with worried, weary eyes. Instinctively he knew her wish. As time passed and she made no reference to what she must have read, as he did, almost daily, an understanding grew up between them. Each felt the other's sympathy though no word was exchanged.

But Jack did a great deal of thinking. Scarcely a day went by that his father was not pilloried as a

man without principle and of dissolute habits. They raked up facts of which Jack had never heard, though he could not make himself disbelieve them. Jimmy was called a sponsor of rogues. The attacks were confined to three papers, but they were vehement and persistent. Again and again, he overheard remarks in the street cars, on corners and at the Bank which voiced the public indignation. His father was held up to contempt and censure by those whom the community esteemed most.

It did not surprise him, for he had no reason to regard his father in a more favorable light. Nor did he believe that it caused his mother anything but shame for the name she bore, a shame in which he shared. His father, all at once, became to him an inevitable, miserable fact. His brooding made him draw more and more within himself.

But what preyed on him most was the question, What would Molly think? Could she forget whose son he was? Would she be allowed to forget it if she wished to? Was this to be the end of the friendship which meant so much to him? His only consolation was that she was away from home. Perhaps, something would happen before she returned to lighten his shame, or make it forgotten. But nothing did happen and one bright, hot day in June he got a note in the early mail which brought him at once face to face with his happiness and his cruel doubts. The note was as follows:

“DEAR JACK:

“We got home to-day. I am aching to tell you all about our trip and other things. I want to ask you a lot of questions. I hear that you now wear a beard and eye-glasses—no, spectacles. And lean on a cane? I must see for myself. I have been all round the world since I saw you last—two years ago—My, what a long time!—but I haven’t seen anyone who is such fun to tease—as you. Come up to-morrow afternoon at half-past four. The house is open for a few days. Then we go to the sea-shore for the rest of the summer. Give my love to Jimmy.

Yours,

“MOLLY STRUTHERS.”

Jack read and reread that note until he could have repeated it backward from memory. Then his own position flashed upon him; and almost straightway, a strange thing happened. He ceased to torment himself with questions, and made up his mind to have the uncertainty over with at once. He would tell her everything; he would tell her all that had occurred to him while she was away; he would tell her the truth about that meeting with his father in the Chicago hotel. Then he would know what to do. There was never less of his father in him, never more of his mother, than at this moment. For the rest of the working day he went about his duties with fresh strength. If Molly was dearer to him than ever before, he also felt a new, great trust in her now that he was to put his happiness into her hands

for aye or nay. Between the teasing, light-hearted lines of the little note in his pocket he was able to read a true, steady faith in himself. It made him steadfast in his determination to be honest with her and with himself. In the time since he had seen her last he had come to look at everything more earnestly.

With her family she had gone abroad the summer following the Chicago Convention, and he had received intermittent letters from her from all sorts of places. But the intervals between these letters had steadily increased after Dick Gans joined the travelers in Geneva. Then, Tom Rowell told him one day that Ellen Harper, who had been with the Chambers in Berlin, wrote that Molly and Dick were said to be engaged, but that it wouldn't be announced till autumn. For some time after this Jack believed that all the bitterness of life was his. He contemplated a dozen desperate deeds; but he did nothing worse than throw away a few dollars on the stock market with a wild idea of becoming suddenly rich, and flaunting his wealth before the heartless and envious Mrs. Richard Gans. When Molly's engagement was not announced and he got a letter from her and then others, he plucked up heart. All was not lost yet. But the crisis did him good. It put him in closer touch with his real self, it revealed to him his strength and weakness—it steadied him. If it

tended to make him less impulsive, it also made him look at himself and others with saner judgment.

But it was hard to be calm, and trustful and staunch to his promise to himself when he saw her. In that room he knew so well with its polished floors, darkened windows and linen-draped furniture all was gratefully cool; the sight of the big fire-place brought remembrance of so many happy hours which might never be enjoyed again. It seemed to him as if he had left the mournful realities of his position together with the glare and heat of the day—outside. Here all was quiet and contentment. Molly, in a dotted muslin dress with gay bows, brought with her a fragrant freshness. It steeped his nostrils. He fed his eyes on her. A stray sunbeam, slanting through the shutters, fell upon her head and pilfered the gold from her hair so that a ladder of dancing motes reached the window.

She had changed a little. Her figure was more rounded; the riches of young womanhood crowned her. Her eyes were deeper and shaded by a sweet seriousness; her manner touched by an illusive something which made her more piquant. This was all that two years had added to the picture which he had been carrying in his heart.

She drew her hand out of his a trifle more quickly than she had been wont to do, but the ring of command which was in her voice as she bade him sit

down and tell her everything, was as dear to him as in the past.

It was so easy to slip into their old confidences. He was watching her eager eyes, listening to her laughing reminiscences—untroubled, forgetful of everything else—before he realized that his resolves were passing from him. It was harder than ever then to throw off the spell of her enchantment and his hopes, and look at the truth. It was yet harder to point this out to her.

Then she suddenly asked, "Now, how about all of my friends here? I have been talking so much that I didn't let you tell me anything. How is—Jimmy?"

"All right," he answered. Her question was a tonic to his purpose. It seemed to him to whisper, "Now is the time! Tell her! Tell her!" He braced himself, and went on, "Jimmy is very busy; he has a big—political fight on his hands. Have you heard of it?"

"Uncle Will said something of it last night. He spoke of a committee of citizens which was being formed to fight against—Jimmy! But I didn't realize that it was Jimmy then. What has he done."

"He? Nothing," returned Jack slowly. "At least, Jimmy is only what he has always been—a Boss. But a lot of people seem to be bent on ruining him."

“To drive him out of politics? What a shame!”

“Do *you* think it is a shame?”

“Yes, of course, I do. What a question to ask one of his friends!”

“You don’t think, then, because so many people are down on him, that he and—the men he stands for are all bad?”

“You know I don’t think Jimmy’s bad. You’ve heard Uncle Will say that he didn’t think so either. Why, Uncle’s refused to join that committee to fight him. I heard him say so last night. But that’s a secret.”

“Your Uncle refused?” exclaimed Jack. He had heard reports of this Committee of Fifty to conduct the fight for reform; if Mr. Chambers had declined to join it, he must have some sympathy with Jimmy and those he represented. He asked eagerly, “What did your Uncle say? I mean, why didn’t he go into the committee?”

“He was too busy, he said; and he didn’t care to be drawn into politics. But, I think, another reason was because he knows Jimmy and is—interested in him.”

“‘Interested,’ yes, that was the word,” Jack said silently. He should have known better than to be buoyed up by the chance that it was deeper feeling. “Your Uncle doesn’t care for politics—except to talk about them,” he forced himself to say.

“No,” replied Molly frankly; “I don’t think he

does. He likes to be well informed. As for anything more—well, you see most politicians aren't—aren't the same as Jimmy. We're awfully democratic here, as you know; but there *are* limits." She laughed.

"Yes, there are—limits," echoed Jack. She did not detect the hard note in his voice, and went on, "Don't you remember some of those men at Chicago—the kind we saw shoving each other around in the hotel lobbies and marching and shouting. That's the kind I mean. Imagine them here!—in this house!" She laughed again. "It's absurd to think of it, isn't it? They'd be putting their feet on the chairs and doing all sorts of things worse than that. No, I don't think Aunt and Uncle could stand them, no matter how hard they might try to be polite."

Jack stiffened his muscles; he felt as if he was about to take an icy plunge, yet the blood burned his neck and cheeks. "Yes," he said, aimlessly; "I remember the men you mean. That was a fine trip, though."

"Wasn't it?" she agreed with enthusiasm. "The Convention! and Mr. Conkling! and Mr. Garfield! And the delegates! We had a splendid time." She went on to recall some of the things which had happened.

Suddenly, Jack sat up straightly, and checked her with the words, "But there was one thing happened at Chicago which I was very sorry for."

"What was it?" she inquired. Her eyes were

wide open with wonderment. She saw his face fill with pain; her own softened. "Why, what's the matter, Jack?" she asked.

"I lied to you at Chicago—Yes, I did." He spoke hurriedly. "Do you remember a man that Jimmy called 'Brown?' He came up to your rooms and Jimmy introduced him to you."

"Yes,—I think—I remember him. Oh! of course, I do. I said I didn't like his looks?"

"That was my father."

"Your—" Molly began. She did not go on. She recalled things. Jack's confusion at the time—Jimmy's invention of circumstances to account for this confusion and for the visit—the man's sleek appearance. She resented the deception, but in a moment she understood that it must have been for a purpose. And, wondering what this could have been, she looked into Jack's face; and the purpose was revealed to her. Had he not just told her that his father was—what he was ashamed of? Jimmy must have known this, and, knowing it, have done what he could to help him.

But while these things were passing through her mind, Jack was speaking. "Yes, that was my father." His voice was almost defiant; it was a poor disguise, but the only one for his wretchedness. "And he's the one who has got Jimmy into all this trouble. Jimmy got in a fight over him. That committee your uncle was asked to join was formed

because Jimmy is going to have my father elected to City Councils."

"I'm—sorry," said Molly. She could think of nothing else to say.

"You're not as sorry as I am," he returned. "For I'm his son. And he's—Oh, what's the use of going on! It isn't interesting to you." He came to a quick halt. She had said nothing; he felt a new edge of bitterness.

And still Molly said nothing. There was nothing that she could say, it seemed to her. Jack was driven by her silence to go on with his explanation. "I told you," he said, "so that you wouldn't think I was pretending to be—what I wasn't. I would have told you before only—I never thought of it. That sounds strange; but it's so—it's so."

"I wish you had told me—at Chicago," said Molly. "It would have been so much—so much easier, somehow."

"Maybe it would. But I didn't tell you. I didn't think so much about it—then. And Jimmy—Jimmy is the best friend I ever had, and I—just let things go—because he wanted them that way."

"Yes," she said. "I don't suppose he could have done anything else. But, I wish, you had trusted me a little."

"Trust you? I would trust you with anything, Molly. But—it was my father—I couldn't—! And Jimmy thought so much of me he didn't see that he

was doing wrong to some one else. You must forgive him; he didn't mean it."

"Of course, I forgive him."

"And—me?"

"You? There is nothing to forgive you for. You can't help——" She faltered and stopped.

His heart was sore. "No, I can't help being—what I am," he said. "Only I could have told you the truth at the start."

"But you have told me now, and it is all right. There is no use of saying anything more."

"Then—you mean this is the—end of it?"

"Yes, I do."

His throat was dry; he clenched his teeth, and saw that she noticed it. "It's nothing," he declared. "I hoped you might say—something different; that's all."

"I don't understand, Jack. I said it the best I could. I wish I could tell you just how I do feel; but I can't."

"I don't want you to," he answered quickly. "I understand." He got to his feet somehow, so dazed and miserable. "Jack! Where are you going?" she said. But he did not speak, and turned toward the door.

She sprang up, and laid a hand on his arm. "Jack! Jack!" she cried. "Don't look that way. Tell me what's the matter! Aren't we friends?"

He shook his head; he was desperately trying to lock up his sobs by pressing his lips together. "But we are friends," she cried again. "You sha'n't go! Sit right down!" She pushed him, and suddenly he sank back in the chair, and the tears trickled between his fingers.

There is a mother in every girl's heart which has only to be called to answer and pour out its comfort and healing. Molly's hand yet rested on his arm; and, though she said nothing, she spoke to him so that his pain was soothed, his sobs abated. All at once, he leaned toward her, his face and voice yearning. "And we shall be friends—always?" he begged.

She laid her hand in one of his, and it closed with nervous clasp. Sweetness and strength and something of his old happiness ran from her fingers into his. "Molly! Molly!" he whispered.

When he went away, half an hour afterward, the sun had sunk behind the houses. Long shadows lay on the pavements. Sparrows, clustering in the ivy-covered walls, twittered contentedly. The sky, dappled with fleecy balls of cloud, edged with crimson, had lost its brazen glare. A wandering breeze stirred the silver poplars and swept away the swimming heat. He took off his hat; the air played with his hair and cooled his head. He walked on, block after block, repeating her words to himself.

He thought that he understood what she had intended he should understand.

“I *can* be just her—*good friend!*” he said half aloud. And when he said it he meant it.

“**I** NEED hardly say why I asked you to come here this evening, Mr. Walsh,” said Joseph Gans. It was in his library, two weeks after Jimmy had been given the lie, and returned a blow.

“I have an idea,” answered Walsh. “You think the time is come to do what we’ve—spoken of before.”

“Yes, Devlin has put himself in a bad hole. We must take full advantage of it. But, first, are we to count you on our side?”

Walsh’s smile behind his glasses might have meant anything.

“You want to know where we stand? What we have to offer? Well, in the first place, as the fact will be public property in a few days, I may tell you that we have formed a committee of fifty citizens. They are representative men—merchants, lawyers, physicians and the like. They are among the most influential men in the city. Here is the list.”

Walsh read the double sheet of foolscap in silence. He folded the paper, and returned it. “It is a strong list. It means a great deal,” he said—“if—”

"If we can stick together? We will. You have only to listen to what is talked of in every respectable quarter of the city to learn how widespread and determined is the feeling against Devlin and his methods."

" 'Talk,' Jimmy says, is fit only to fill toy balloons."

"But this is a different kind. You know the calibre of the men on that list; they generally accomplish what they set out to do. It took a good deal to get them started, I'll admit; now that they are aroused, they will wage such a fight against the political machine as never has been seen before."

"But they have no political experience."

"Very little. The Citizens' League will do all it can to supply that. For the rest—we look to you and, possibly, Showell."

"And if we don't see our way to join you?"

"Frankly, then, we shall fight you as well as Devlin."

The two men looked at each other squarely. Walsh's face was inscrutable; it was matched by the open, intelligent, earnest countenance of Gans, which, having nothing to conceal in the immediate issue, furnished no clue to the keen inspection of the other.

"If you fought Devlin, Showell and myself we should beat you," declared Walsh.

"Probably, in the first encounter. But we are in

this fight to stay as long as the evils remain. We shall not be deterred by a reverse."

"Devlin is your one complaint?"

"No, but he is the chief one. We intend to teach a lesson which will be remembered. We are not impracticable; we are almost willing to recognize the Boss as a necessity of our political system. But he has got to be a Boss who is amenable to the wishes of the people in some degree. Abuses like the Water Trust are going to be stamped out. No man shall again get a hold such as Devlin has had."

"You forget that three of us hold that position. What of Showell and myself?"

"You will be with us, I hope?"

"But after this fight is—won?"

Gans replied slowly, after a pause, "What you do *then* remains with yourselves. If you profit by the lesson taught J. Devlin—Boss, you should have a secure place. There is legitimate power in politics. At least, what there 'is, is better than none at all."

"You are candid," remarked Walsh drily.

"You know that I have spoken common sense. I think you will be with us."

"Why?"

"Because you are an ambitious man, and because you now have a choice before you. Devlin never had such a chance, I daresay. He took politics as he found them, and made all that he could out of

them for himself. He is shrewd and a hard worker; he earned what he got, in a way. But it was earned by twisting everything; he has gone so far that he can't back out now."

"Which he wouldn't do, if he could."

"No, but you can, and will. Devlin is your rival. I have a distinct recollection of one trick he played you which serves as evidence of this. He means that you shall never supersede him. Now is your opportunity."

Walsh's lips made a thin line. "That is a question," he said.

Gans walked across the room. When he was facing Walsh again, he stopped, and said, "There is nothing to be gained by bandying words. You know the situation; you came here with your mind made up. We want you to speak out—to-night. Are you for, or against us?"

"With you," answered Walsh shortly. "But in secret, for the present."

"Of course. We have talked over that. No one but our committee and Showell and yourself shall know that you are not Devlin's ally,—at least not until the nominations are sprung. I don't like treachery, but, I suppose, we must fight him with every weapon we can get."

"You'd be laughed at if you didn't. And Showell and I? We are to have a free foot in conducting our end of the fight?"

“ Entirely so, except that we must agree upon the nominations.”

“ You are trustful,” remarked Walsh.

“ I have the best reason to be so—with you. I know that you cannot hope to get what you want by betraying us to Devlin. For both you and Devlin can’t be supreme at the same time and you will be content with nothing less than first place.”

Walsh smiled; it was a tribute to the other’s penetration.

“ As to Showell? Will he be governed by your decision? ” Gans asked.

“ Sam Showell,” said Walsh, “ is governed by two things—his stomach and his pocketbook. He can satisfy the first if the second is well supplied. I can show him that it will be very empty, if he doesn’t stick by me.”

“ He must be kept within bounds,” returned Gans. “ But we must have him. He can deal with a class of voters we should have a hard time to approach.”

“ He will be with me. He has no reason to love Jimmy, anyhow.”

The two men bade each other good-night an hour later. As they faced each other the contrast was marked. But their respect for brains was mutual, and of this they made no concealment. But, for all that, each had a plan which he did not confide to the other.

Gans intended that the downfall of Jimmy should be the beginning of a concentrated attack on Walsh, if the latter, as he foresaw, attempted to revive in himself the methods and domination of Jimmy.

Walsh had decided that the same downfall should furnish opportunity for discarding his reform allies, and, as soon as might be, declaring himself boldly for what he was determined to be—dictator of party politics in the city.

But all this depended upon Jimmy's downfall, and such a catastrophe Jimmy himself did not regard with apprehension. The unique and formidable revelation of the independent spirit in politics embodied in the Committee of Fifty, now with its aims declared and its representatives hard at work, had not surprised him entirely. He understood that the first real fight of his life as a leader of the party was on; and his eyes kindled at the prospect. He regretted the blow he had struck, yet, secretly he was glad of the occasion which it had precipitated for him to demonstrate his personal force, and make an end, for once and all, of the persistent and growing attempts to cripple him. He believed that the time had come when he should assert himself, and dominate allies and foes alike.

For Jimmy, as the weeks wore on and the Committee of Fifty disclosed its strength, saw that the reformers would be defeated. The contest would be sharp, but it could have but one ending, under the

circumstances. The minority party, with wisdom bought of many and calamitous tilts with him, held aloof from the reformers. They rejected the profers of an alliance because they believed that their best chance was to fight independently. If they were not successful in this fight, at least they would be no worse off than before; if Jimmy won, which they firmly believed he would, they would not figure among his personal enemies. Moreover, they had an innate reluctance to associating themselves with a movement which had for its purpose the dispossession of political bosses. So the situation developed into a three-cornered fight, the main issue lying, apparently, between the Committee of Fifty and the Three Czars.

For all his confidence in the result, Jimmy threw himself into the preliminaries of this struggle with energy. The summer months saw him working night and day. He fairly ran Walsh and Showell off their feet. Again and again he spurred them on.

"What's th' use of this break-neck rush?" asked Walsh one day. "They can't beat th' three of us; you say that yourself."

"Yes, I'm about played out," complained Showell, mopping his forehead. "You'll do yourself up, if yo' don't quit," he admonished.

"It's no time for resting now," returned Jimmy. "We *will* beat them, but not by taking things easy.

Wait a few weeks. Then we can slack up with safety."

So, while Walsh and Showell left town in July for a brief rest Jimmy stuck to his post and worked hard enough for the three.

The summer was a trying one; the heat intense; and now and then he had a sensation of faintness in his head. It was a warning, which for a time, he refused to harken to, because it seemed, with each succeeding day, that Walsh and Showell allowed more of the work to fall on his shoulders, and he was too proud to weaken under the strain. Besides, nothing suited his own plans better than to have the final settlement of questions left to him. Increased responsibility and labor now meant for him a stronger grasp on the situation and greater personal power when victory was won.

The selection of a City ticket to be nominated in September was largely made by him, and the discouraging task of adjusting differences in the wards among the various factions was accomplished by his perseverance and sagacity. Marcus's prospective nomination was the most distasteful, but not the most difficult of the questions which his powers of persuasion settled.

But after the party ticket had been substantially agreed upon, one morning in August, a strange blindness suddenly fell upon him while he was in the street, and it was borne upon him that, if he did

not take a holiday at once, something very inconvenient would happen soon.

Quite abruptly that afternoon he turned to Walsh and Showell and shamefacedly acknowledged that the heat had overmastered him. He said, "Now, I'm going to get out of this. If anybody wants to know where Jimmy is for th' next two weeks, tell 'em an angel carried him away, he was so good. I leave to-morrow."

"For two weeks, did you say?" asked Walsh. He was facing the other way, and the back of the head lacks expression.

Jimmy answered what seemed to be a casual question. "Yes, for two weeks. There's no more to be done right now. Everything's running like a train of cars. You and Showell can keep th' track clear, I guess."

Showell nodded and put a hand to his face. Jimmy's sight was keen, and Showell knew that his features were not proof against the elation that stirred him.

But Walsh was better off. He turned and held out a hand. His voice was as cordial as it ever could be. "I'm glad you're going," he exclaimed. "I've been telling you all along that you needed a rest."

"We'll notify you, if anything turns up," said Showell.

"No, you won't," returned Jimmy. "For you

won't know where I am. I wouldn't go if there was any chance of you needing me. Th' way it is, I won't have telegrams or letters chasing me. I'm not going to leave my address."

With a light heart and a feeling akin to that which possessed him when, as a boy, he ran from the "News" office, work being done for the day, Jimmy walked toward Kate's house that same afternoon.

On the way he chanced upon Casey, and gave him a cheery "good-day." Then, something made him stop and call Casey to his side.

"Mat," he said, "you've got a good pair of ears?"

"Mrs. Casey complains thet they sthick out," Casey replied.

"Perhaps they're all th' better for that," said Jimmy. "At any rate, good hearing's what I'm after. So keep your ears open for th' next couple of weeks. If anything goes into your head that you know I must hear—*must*, you understand—take yourself to this address and see Mrs. Doran. Catch on?"

The little Irishman nodded sagaciously, and Jimmy left him. But he said nothing to Kate of his holiday until he was about to leave. Then he handed her a slip of paper.

She read aloud the few words penciled on it. "J. H. Smith—Bay Side Hotel—Sea Cliff." She looked up. "I don't understand," she said. "What does this mean?"

“It means,” he said, “that, if you want to let me know anything during th’ next two weeks, you’re to write that on your envelope. I’m going off to get acquainted with myself—under a new name. Jimmy doesn’t seem to be a good holiday name, somehow.”

“**A**N’ once he tried t’ make me b’lieve I didn’t know nuthin’ ’bout politics,” remarked Bill Brady. Brady’s lean, furrowed face was wrinkled in humorous appreciation of the inference of his reflection. He tilted back further in his chair, and shifted his feet, which were propped against the table.

“Every dog has his day,” rejoined Sam Showell. Like Brady’s, his chair was balanced on two legs, and its occupant, in shirt sleeves and without his collar, was attired like the men about him. He wiped his perspiring face, blew a cloud of smoke and watched it drift from the open window into the air of the hot August night. “Jimmy’s day’ll end so soon he won’t know where he’s at, eh, Ed?” he added, addressing Walsh.

Walsh who retained his coat and wore a high collar, passed a handkerchief lightly across his forehead. “Yes,” he answered, “and you may remember, Showell, I said something about that—one election night, not long ago. The time came quicker than I had hoped for. Jimmy helped us along when he knocked down that fire-eater, Claghorn.”

The speaker removed his eye-glasses, and leisurely polished them. He did it with a deliberate care that was characteristic of him. His person seemed to exhale an atmosphere of cool comfort which made the heat more trying to his companions.

There were seven men in varying states of undress in this room which Showell used as an office. They had met at eight o'clock of that evening, and it was now ten o'clock. The room was filled with smoke in which the gas flames burned with yellow edges. For the two hours the men had gulped ice water and sworn at the heat, and talked. But, for most of the time, they had been listening to Walsh. He was tacitly recognized as chairman of their meetings, and already had presided at half a dozen at which were the men now around him. He was the organizer of the plan which had first brought them together, and he, too, was the connecting link with the Committee of Fifty.

Walsh replaced his glasses, and spoke again. He reviewed certain facts in the political situation as developed within the past two months and particularly in the week past. He talked in a clear voice that made every word distinct. Only those who knew him thoroughly would have guessed that his colorless tones and unmoved face masked feelings deep and dominating, and that he exulted inwardly when his language was most matter of fact.

The men listened to him almost with indiffer-

ence. They were familiar with what he was telling them. But, when he had finished his rapid survey, Showell put in, "Did y' see Gans t'day?"

"Yes," replied Walsh, "and he is satisfied."

"With eight Councilmen? I thought he'd raise a kick when it came out yesterday that we'd got th' Nineteenth and Eighth Wards. That gives us twelve for certain."

"Twelve Councilmen; but th' Committee splits even with us on th' Magistrates."

"They get their share. They get a lot more than they ought, it strikes me," declared Con Murray, who was thin, short and wiry, with coarse face.

"A damn sight more!" added Brady. "I tell y', Walsh, these here reformers have bin layin' down th' law too strong t' my way a thinkin'."

"Oh, I don't know," returned Walsh. "They're able to lay down th' law some—just now. We all know that, if it hadn't been for th' Committee, we couldn't have controlled th' City ticket. As it stands,—we've got Jimmy beaten."

Brady chuckled. "Beat good an' hard," he confirmed. "An' th' best of it is he's—down by th' waves—takin' life easy; an' don't know nuthin'. Say, Walsh, you didn't do a thing but shut his eye up, you an' Showell!"

Showell grinned. "We did it all right, you bet," he said. "He ain't got a smell of what's goin' on."

"Sure?" asked Murray.

“I’m as good as sure,” replied Walsh. “I know Jimmy pretty well. I’ve been in his confidence as much as any one ever was, I guess; and I don’t believe he has th’ smallest idea of anything going wrong. Even now his people are only beginning to scent trouble; they don’t know what’s in th’ air, and they don’t know where to find him, which is better still. He’ll be away a week longer—according to his plans. By th’ time he comes back—”

“It won’t matter much what he finds out,” Showell supplied. “With th’ primaries fixed th’ way we’ve got ’em already, an’ th’ Conventions put in such shape that they can’t be shaken, why, Jimmy can run about all he’s a mind to.”

“I think we’re safe,” went on Walsh. “We’ve got th’ whip-handle of Jimmy this time. As for th’ Committee of Fifty, they think they’ll down us after this is all over; but I can’t see that that need worry us, if we keep our mouths shut and our eyes wide open. Th’ thing we care about is that they’re helping us to down Mr. J. Devlin.” Walsh lingered on the name with sarcastic emphasis. There was a suspicion of triumph in his face, a touch of color in his pale cheeks. He looked around on the men. The room was absolutely silent.

Then a floor board cracked loudly in the hallway, and Walsh sprang to his feet. Without a word, he strode to the door, unlocked it and opened it suddenly. He slipped into the hall.

It was dark there except for a light flickering at the stairhead, twenty feet away. The building was an old one, its one-time bed-chambers serving as offices. Its hallways were cut up and badly lighted. Walsh, peering into the gloom, could see no one.

He stood listening. Then he walked to the stairhead, and looked down. A lamp on the street just outside the open door made a rectangle of light. Nothing interrupted his field of vision there. He walked back and along the hallway, past the door where his companions were. They called to him, but he went on. He hunted in the darkness in the rear of the hall, but found nothing to confirm his suspicions. He returned to the room. Brady and Murray had come to the doorway. The rest had not stirred. They laughed at him as he entered.

"See any ghosts?" asked Brady.

"It sounded as if somebody was at th' door," he protested.

"If you'd been in here as much as I have you wouldn't jump every time a board creaks," Showell said. "Th' place's a regular old barn."

Walsh did not answer, but began to collect some scattered sheets of paper. The men were talking among themselves. Showell stretched his arms, and gave a prodigious yawn. "I guess this meetin' can adjourn, can't it?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Walsh. "I don't think there's

anything more—for to-night. We'll meet here—to-morrow night, if that suits?"

The rest of the men agreed. They got up, and, with much grumbling, began to don their collars. One by one, they went down the stairs, coats on arms. Walsh and Showell went last. They started to walk across-town in company. They were talking earnestly. So intent were they on their argument that neither of them noticed a man dodge around a corner, a short distance ahead of them.

But this man, looking over his shoulder, had seen them, and it was his recognition of their faces which made him cut out of their way. "Thim divils agin!" he muttered, and increased his pace.

He was a short man with sandy hair and sharp eyes. Behind the bar in Casey's saloon he was familiarly known as "Mat." But just at this time, Mat Casey's thoughts were very far from his bottles and liquors. He was silently cursing a certain loose board in the floor of a hallway back of him, and, in the next breath, praising the saints for the gloom in the rear of that hallway. It was the darkness there, coupled with Walsh's failure to carry his search to the end of the building which had enabled him to avoid discovery—a discovery that would have upset his plans.

For Mat Casey was one of Jimmy's people who, as Walsh said, scented trouble. Moreover, having scented it, he put his nose to the trail as it were,

and, for four days, followed it in vain. On this night he had met with better luck; and his feet were growing tired with standing outside a closed door, his ear pressed against its panels, when his presence was signalled by a sprung board in the floor. When Walsh and Showell went down stairs he followed them, and took a side street. After he dodged them at the corner, he kept to the small, unfrequented streets; and so, in a few minutes, was brought to the door-step of Marcus Doran's house. While he waited admittance, he repeated to himself; "'F y' hear anything, see Mrs. Doran.'"

Presently, a lazy footstep sounded from within, and the door opened. Mat found himself facing a man. It was Marcus who had just come in.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"Is this where Mrs. Doran lives?" asked Casey.

"Yes, I'm Mr. Doran." Marcus did not know Casey by name, but a faint remembrance of his face brought Jimmy to his recollection.

"I want t' see Mrs. Doran; I've got a missage fur her," explained Casey.

"What is it?" asked Marcus.

"Oi'll be afther tillin' 't only t' her."

"Then you'll wait a good while; for she's not to be seen." Marcus wondered what the message might be which such a man as this brought to Kate. His faint identification of Casey made him link it with Jimmy; and, immediately, he was interested.

As the message was not meant for his ears he was the more eager to hear it. "Mrs. Doran's sick," he explained in a less aggressive tone. "She can't see anybody. If th' message is in writing, I'll take it up to her."

"'T isn't in writhin'," replied Casey. He was puzzled what to do. He recognized Marcus as a hanger-on at Jimmy's office and there was every reason why the latter, therefore, should be a friend. But the word which he carried was to be intrusted to only one person. It was Mrs. Doran, not Mr. Doran, whom Jimmy had bade him seek in an emergency. So it was Mrs. Doran, and no one else that he would speak his tidings to now. He told Marcus this.

Marcus reiterated his explanation.

Casey wavered the briefest moment. His keen eyes studied Marcus's face which the light of a street lamp partly revealed. He was not prepossessed, and declared, "But 'tis Mrs. Doran Oi must see. 'Tis important, 's this thing Oi'm t' till her."

Marcus tried a chance shot which was not altogether a chance shot, either. "It's from Mr. Devlin, is it?" he said.

"No, 't 's n't," returned Casey. "But 't 's him thet 'll be raisin' all hill, 'f 't don't rache Mrs. Doran all roight an' at wanst."

Marcus was set straight. He took prompt advantage of the opening. "Then keep your message for Mrs. Doran till you see her next," he said. "And I'll

tell Mr. Devlin about to-night. He'll thank you—in his own way—when he hears that I offered to take your message to Mrs. Doran, when she couldn't see you herself; and that you refused to let me have it." He stepped back, and reached a hand toward the door, as if to close it.

The little Irishman's face made no concealment of his anxiety. "Wait a minute there," he exclaimed. "Oi'm thinkin' av 't over."

He looked at Marcus again and again, and worked his shoulders uncomfortably. He distrusted Marcus on general principles, yet he was much more afraid of the results of being barred out with his message undelivered. He stood so long, mumbling and shifting his footing, that Marcus made another movement toward the door.

Casey instantly stepped toward him and laid a hand on his arm. "Oi'm goin' t' till 't t' y'," he said in a low voice. "An', Mishter Doran do y' carry th' same sthraight t' Mrs. Doran. 'F y' don't, be hivins! Oi'll be hilpin' y' t' a share av me own onaisy moind by puttin' me fist in y'r face th' first toime we mate."

Marcus started involuntarily, then tried to laugh. The laugh was an empty one; it convinced Casey that he faced a coward. And that made him feel less concern as to the safety of his message. 'Oi mane all thet," he went on. "But this 's no toime fur makin' thrits. Here's th' wurrurd y're t' take t' Mrs. Doran. They've got t' in fur Mishter Divilin—

Walsh an' Showell an' th' rist av thet false-face gang. They 're holdin' matins behint his back, an' he's away at th' say-shore, an' knows nuthin' av 't. They wuz wan av them matins t'night, an' 'twuz mesilf thet overhird their talk. They've jined hands wid th' Commitay av Fifty, an' they're puttin' up a bunco game on Jimmy—Mishter Divilin, I mane. I hird them say thet they'd got th' whole City Ticket fixed, an' thet th' nominations 'd give him no more offices than y' c'd count an y'r two hands. Thet durty traitur av a Walsh 's ladin' th' consphiracy. Be th' same token, 't 's th' divil 's t' pay! 'T 's mesilf thet'd run all av th' way t' till Jimmy av this, 'f I knew where he wuz, which I don't,—more 's th' bad luck. An' 't wuz him tould me b'fore he lift, t' bring any missage fur him here—t' Mrs. Doran—as fast as Oi c'd, an'—thet's all."

Casey had talked so fast that he came to a stop gasping for breath. His eyes were aglow, his fingers working. If his mind had not been concentrated on his story he might have profited by the changes which wrote themselves on the other's countenance. When he did think to notice how Marcus took the news, he saw nothing on his face to excite alarm.

Marcus was pale, and his lips twitched a little. Casey's fleeting impression was that Marcus took this direful information to heart, and he was glad of it. It showed that he was startled by Jimmy's danger.

And he was right. Marcus had taken the news to

heart; it fairly stunned him for a moment. He did not credit it until he realized how accurately Jimmy's absence from the city fitted with the facts which Casey had stated and with the rumors of double-dealing that had been afloat for several days. Then, it came to him that this conspiracy might mean Jimmy's downfall, and he quaked—for himself.

He saw the dreams of luxurious ease and increasing power, which that promise of the nomination for Councils had created, fade into nothing. He saw his hold on Jimmy made of no avail by Jimmy's ruin. He was stricken by alarm accordingly.

When Casey grasped his arm, and urged him, "Be afther hurryin' now! Till Mrs. Doran as quick as y' can," he could only stammer, "You must be wrong. Jimmy's not—going to be—fooled—that way. There's some mistake."

"Mishtake's there's none," asserted Casey. "I'm shure av what I've bin tillin' y'. 'F Jimmy's t' save himsilf 't 's back here he must be at wanst. Mrs. Doran 'll know how t' get him, I'm shure, though th' rist av us has no idea av where he is."

Marcus hesitated no longer. For all of his astonishment and fears, he was alive to the unpleasant results which the anger of the little Irishman might entail. He put out a hand.

"You've done a good thing in bringing this message," he said. "I'll see that you ain't forgotten for it."

Casey gave the outstretched hand a shake, and dropped it quickly. "An', indade, 't 's Mishter Divilin 'll be attindin' t' thet!" he returned. "But y' 're wastin' y'r toime. Hurry, an' till Mrs. Doran Oi'll wait t' hear 'f 't 's all roight."

Marcus turned, and walked back the hallway briskly. But, when he reached the stairway foot, he paused, and slowly went up the stairs. He was trying to decide what to do. Should he tell Kate, and enable her to warn Jimmy? His personal interests seemed to urge this course. But his crafty nature made him reluctant to take the irrevocable step until he had weighed all the chances. Even now he saw dim possibilities in profiting from Jimmy's defeat, if defeat it was to be. Nor could he be sure that this was not to be the result. Kate might have the address, and she might send the warning, and Jimmy might come as fast as steam could carry him, and yet—not be in time.

When he had reached the stairhead he was so far persuaded by the uncertainties of the situation that he determined not to give the message to Kate just yet. To satisfy Casey and to give himself time to think the whole thing over, he waited for a minute in the back of the hall, then retraced his steps swiftly to the street door.

"Well, 's 't all roight?" demanded Casey. "Did y' till her?"

"It's all right," returned Marcus reassuringly.

He compelled a cheerful smile. "Mr. Devlin 'll get th' message."

Casey's face shone with relief and new confidence. He said "Good night," and was trudging up the street.

Marcus closed the door, and stood in the hallway for several minutes, thinking. So far he seemed to have the thing entirely in his own hands. Kate was asleep, and had heard nothing. He judged rightly that Casey would say nothing of what he had done to anyone or take any action which would lead to the disclosure of his discovery until he had seen Jimmy. Walsh and his confederates, on their side, would naturally guard the secret as long as it was possible to do so. Marcus argued, that he, therefore, had at least twenty-four hours in which to consider the question as it affected him. Twenty-four hours in which to decide whether his silence and inaction or his information was likely to be worth more to him. He went up stairs, and, in the sitting room, thought it all out.

He was not surprised to learn that Jimmy had told Kate of his whereabouts, and, he was convinced that he had only to give her the message which Casey had brought to fetch Jimmy to the city in the shortest possible time. The result of this would be to precipitate a battle between Jimmy and Walsh and the Committee of Fifty. Marcus knew enough of the political situation to be sure that the outcome of

such a fight would be doubtful at best. Indeed, he was not able to see how Jimmy, at this late hour, could win a victory. From his point of view his best chance, therefore, seemed to lie in making a bargain with Walsh. This treachery was not likely to do him any injury with Jimmy; for his hold on the latter was not affected by hate or esteem. It would only be invalidated by Jimmy's defeat. He came to the conclusion that, all in all, it would be wise to prepare against such a catastrophe. To that end he said nothing to Kate, and went to bed, determined to see Walsh the next day.

It was eight o'clock on the following morning when he rang the bell at Walsh's comfortable home, and was shown into the parlor. Walsh was breakfasting, and Marcus had to wait fifteen minutes.

Walsh lived as he dressed, and for much the same reasons. He was a married man, but his wife was strictly an external of his life. She represented him socially with a certain set whom he led politically within party lines. His residence was in keeping with this relation and its requirements. To Marcus it seemed luxurious in a degree. The room in which he sat, with its filmy curtains, cool matting and artistic furniture and decorations, appealed to his fondness for ease and good things. He contrasted it with his own house, and was disgusted. He recalled the bare rooms with which Jimmy was content, and was the more impressed with the qualities which enabled

Walsh to desire and obtain for himself the things which here surrounded him. He was confirmed in the opinion that he had done well in coming to Walsh. Such a man was much more to his taste than Jimmy with his scorn of luxury and plain dress and habits.

He had got so far in a train of thought which was pleasing, if somewhat lacking in coherency, when Walsh walked into the room, and said in a voice that brought his visitor rudely into the present, "You wanted to see me?"

"Yes," answered Marcus; "I came to—to ask your advice."

"What about?" Walsh knew Marcus slightly, and did not care to know him better. Marcus was a parasite, and parasites were of little use, very annoying, and very plenty.

"It's a question of politics. I've found out something that I want——"

"To sell?"

"Perhaps."

Walsh regarded his caller more closely. Marcus was Jimmy's particular parasite, he remembered. It might not be well to drive him away until he had exhibited his wares. A half hour might be given to the task of examining these. He changed his tone accordingly. "Well, maybe, you've come to th' right place," he said. "Will you walk back here?"

He took Marcus into a small library, and they sat down,—the spider and the fly. And, in ten minutes, Marcus was sucked dry of all his information, and Walsh, who had formed his plan, was regarding him with a pitying smile.

Marcus twisted on his chair and moved his feet. Walsh's amusement worried him. Then it made him angry. "What's th' matter anyway?" he asked.

"Nothing—except—I'm sorry for you."

"Sorry for—me? What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Walsh in a dry tone; "that you've been made a fool of. Jimmy's made use of you in a clever way. I tell you this because it can do no harm—now. But I'm sorry for you."

"How—how have I been fooled?" All of Marcus's ideas were upside down.

"You've been fooled with a cock-and-bull story about—a conspiracy, I think you said. You tell me that I'm at the head of it. Now, that's sheer nonsense. Think a moment! Think of how close Jimmy and Showell and I are! Think of the fact that this fight is a fight made by reformers! Think of all those things, and you'll understand what absurd talk you've listened to. Whoever told you this yarn, spun it out of the rumors that have been on the streets for days. I've heard them myself. They amount to nothing. For that matter, I mentioned them in a letter I sent to Jimmy yesterday. I expect he's

laughing at them now. And that's all they are worth—a laugh."

"What's that got to do with me? Where do I come in?"

"Right here, though you'll know it soon enough—when Jimmy comes back. Th' fact is, Doran—you're an impossibility as a Councilman. Jimmy and th' rest of us recognized that from th' beginning, though it's due Jimmy to say that he tried to do what you wanted. It was your name that started that row at the Colonial Club."

In a flash Marcus saw what he thought was the truth. He knew that the report of his prospective nomination had been the cause of the blow struck by Jimmy; he guessed at a great deal more which Walsh's explanation had not recounted. "So—so Jimmy threw me overboard?" he said in a low voice. "He didn't dare to tell me!"

"Exactly," answered Walsh. "It really couldn't be helped. There's no use of acting ugly about it."

"Isn't there? I'll show him if there isn't!" Marcus's voice rose viciously. "I'll show him this very day!" he added.

"How?" asked Walsh, his tones indicating that the threat was amusing. He was interested in this unexpected development. It promised to undo the good work which his lies had just accomplished. For, if Marcus communicated with Jimmy at all, he would bring him to the city.

"Never mind how," returned Marcus. "I know how to handle Jimmy. He'll be dead sure of that when he gets my telegram this afternoon."

"Now, look here!" said Walsh sympathetically; "I know how you must feel. It *is* rough. Between you and me, Jimmy didn't act by you exactly as he should; I told him that before he left. I don't wonder that you're sore. But what's th' use of kicking to him? You can't make him do anything—now."

"Can't I? Well, I guess I can! I've got Devlin where I want him. I can make him give me that nomination, and I will."

Walsh would have liked to find out what it was that made Marcus so sure; but he did not want to excite suspicions; besides, he doubted if Marcus would tell at this time. It served his purpose if Marcus did as he wanted him to do. "Well, I can't stop you," he said. "Nor do I blame you, altogether. But, if you want my opinion, you'll keep quiet for a while. You'll cut off your own head, maybe, if you don't."

"I don't see it."

"You will; for you'll cripple Jimmy."

Marcus grinned. "That's just what I'm after now," he replied.

"But, you've forgotten, that, when you cripple Jimmy, you lose a lot yourself. It's this way. You send word to Jimmy, we'll say, that, unless he comes home and puts your name up for Councilman, you'll

—well, you'll do whatever it is that he don't want you to do. So he comes up, and—nominates you. What's th' result? You're defeated; for, I tell you, neither he nor any one else can force your election this time. It might even be that th' attempt would knock him out; stranger things have happened. It was only by dropping you that he held onto a big vote in your ward that he needed badly. And now what do you gain? Nothing, that I can see. But what do you lose? A great deal. For Jimmy can't give you th' things you may want in th' future, if he hasn't got them to give."

The argument was not unfamiliar to Marcus, and in such cogent terms appealed to him forcibly. It seemed to him to confirm the statement that Walsh and Showell remained faithful to Jimmy. Walsh, as an ally of Jimmy, would be anxious, for purely selfish reasons, if for nothing else, to serve Jimmy's interests.

But, if the argument tended to convince Marcus that the story of a conspiracy was a canard and that he was the one who had been betrayed, it made it no easier for him to swallow his disappointment and forego his threatened revenge.

Walsh cajoled, flattered and reasoned with him for half an hour before he succeeded in persuading him that his best plan was to say nothing to Jimmy, and to wait.

When he shook hands with his visitor on the door-

step and turned again into the house, Walsh's lip curled with scorn; but he was satisfied with the way in which he had handled the complication. He believed that he had assured himself against the recall of Jimmy.

And this was thoroughly desirable, though not essential to his plans and those of his confederates. The conspiracy against Jimmy had now advanced too far, he believed, to be defeated in open fight. Indeed, from the day on which Walsh and Showell joined hands with the Committee of Fifty the issue became questionable. The work secretly done between that time and the date of Jimmy's departure had brought the odds in favor of the reformers and their co-laborers. Every day that Jimmy remained away from the city, in ignorance of the truth, increased the handicap against him.

Marcus left Walsh's house ripe for any deed which would secure for him what he had been told he had lost. His anger waxed as he pondered on the advice which Walsh had given him, and realized that, to inflict an injury on Jimmy, was to hurt his own case. He spent the remainder of the morning, nursing his wrath and hunting for Con Murray. He had to tell his story to some one.

At last he came upon Murray. "Con," he said; "do you know what's happened?"

"No, what?"

"I've been played for a 'sucker!'"

“Who did it?” asked Murray. A peculiar expression, partly of affected concern, partly of amusement flitted over his face.

“Jimmy!” said Marcus. “He’s knocked me out—knocked out our game!”

“What game?”

“Th’ only one I know of is putting me into Councils. You were going to get some of th’ ‘rake-offs.’ I don’t see how you forget so easily.”

“Oh, *that!*” said Murray hastily. “I hadn’t forgot that. Only—I didn’t know you could—a’ heard.”

“What?”

“Tell me your story first; then maybe, mine won’t be needed.”

Marcus, once started, blurted out the story which Walsh had told him. At the end he was cursing Jimmy, and demanding what his companion thought of it.

Murray looked the astonishment which he felt. He was surprised, not at Marcus’s reference to the conspiracy, but at the tale told by Walsh of Jimmy’s betrayal of Marcus. He did not believe that Jimmy had done this. The mention of Walsh’s name showed him that Marcus had purposely been misled.

Without compunction he said, “It’s so! it’s so! I heard that he’d done y’ a dirty trick, but I wasn’t sure of it. So I kept my mouth shut. It won’t do no good t’ go round now, slinging hard words,

either. It's done. We've been played; an' we've got t' take our medicine like little men. We'll have our chance—later. Jimmy 'll have some stiff lie t' tell y', when he comes back. If y' do as I would, y'll pretend t' swallow it, too. Then, he may slip up."

Marcus burst into a renewed volley of curses. Murray nodded approval. "He's all that," he said. Then his cunning suggested a further deception.

"Say, look here!" he went on in lowered voice. "I think Jimmy's up against it good and hard, if y' want t' know what I think. I don't believe he'll come out on top this time. He wouldn't a' got rid of you if he hadn't bin afraid of somethin' happenin'."

"Do you think they'll down him—in th' election?" asked Marcus startled.

"Oh, I don't say that. But I'd be ready t' play my own game, whatever turns up. I'd be ready t' stand in with th' fellow that wins. Your pull on Jimmy won't do you no good, if he's knocked out. I'd be on th' ground t' sell whatever I had—t' th' other side,—when th' time comes."

Many drinks had helped to befog Marcus's brain and inflame his resentment. Murray saw that his somewhat dangerous words had not done harm. When he left Marcus, he believed that he had promoted the plot to keep Jimmy in ignorance of what was going on.

But two things happened within a few hours to upset these plans.

Marcus, at twelve o'clock that night, had succeeded in inserting his latch-key into the front door and was in the act of entering, when a man stepped from the shadow of the house wall, and spoke to him.

It was Mat Casey.

"Mishter Doran," he said; "did y' sind that wurrurd t' Mishter Divilin?"

Marcus was in a condition in which his wits did not serve him faithfully. His single fixed idea was that the message should not go to Jimmy. Wanting only to be rid of Casey, he said, "Yes, it's gone—long ago." He tried to pass into the house.

But Casey was of no mind to be shut out. All day he had looked for Jimmy in the places where he should be found if in the city, and had not found him; nor had he heard from him. He did not trust Marcus, and he was bent on having the truth this time. "An', 'f y' sint th' missage, why ain't Mishter Divilin here?" he demanded.

"I don't know. That's *his* business." returned Marcus. "I can't stop here. Good night!"

He tried to push past Casey who had slid around in front of him; but the little Irishman stood his ground. His suspicions were wide awake; he was sure now that the message had not been sent. "Y' don't go in," he said; "till Oi know 'f 'y gave th' wurrurd t' Mrs. Doran."

Marcus's temper got away with him. He gave Casey a hard push. Casey staggered, and fell against the door-frame with a crash that echoed through the house. It brought Kate to the stairhead.

But, by that time, she heard the sounds of a struggle below in the hallway; and she stood where she was, silent, certain that it was a row, the culmination of one of Marcus's debauches; uncertain what to do.

In the lower hallway Marcus Doran was getting the first sound thrashing as a man which his cowardice had not enabled him to escape. Casey's fighting blood was up with that push. He was on his feet in an instant, and pinned Marcus against the wall. With his free hand he drummed on the latter's face as often as he could hit the mark in the dim light, while he told Marcus what he thought of him.

"Y're a durty cur!" he cried. "An' a liar thrown in! Y' sint no missage t' Jimmy! Y' tould him nothin' av what 's goin' on b'hint his back! Y' lift him t' think thet Walsh an' Showell wuz actin' sthstraight, whin it's sthickin' a knoife in him they 're at! Thin, take thet fur not givin' Mrs. Doran th' wurrurd Oi brought y'! An' thet fur th' loie y' sphoke whin y' said y' tould her! An' thet fur not sindin' th' missage t' Jimmy! An' thet fur Jimmy's sake! An' thet fur moine; An' thet fur Mrs. Doran's!"

Each denunciation Casey punctuated with his fist.

Marcus struck out wildly and to small account. Casey held him fast against the wall, and was merciless.

Marcus began to bellow for help, and tried to shield his face with his arms. Only then did his assailant desist. He released his clasp on Marcus's throat. Marcus dropped to the floor, moaning.

Casey stood over him for a moment, almost regretting the thrashing he had given; for now he must go, and the message was still undelivered. He wheeled, with a snort, and ran from the house.

And, then, Kate hurried down stairs. Alarm, disgust and indignation had succeeded one another in her breast as she heard Marcus's cries, the thud of blows and the accusations. These last were a revelation that tied her tongue and held her fast, her ears strained, her face white and fearful. She was sure that they were true, though she did not know the man who uttered them. Jimmy's absence, Marcus's character corroborated them. So it was that, when she should have called out and, perhaps, have saved Marcus from that beating, she could do no more than listen and try to pierce the darkness which hid the fighting men. Casey's departing footsteps brought sharply to her mind the fact that Marcus lay on the floor below, and that her ministrations were needed.

But Marcus, she found was not badly hurt. His bloody face was a miserable sight, but the curses and

threats of a terrible revenge on Casey with which he interlarded his groans, assured Kate that her sympathy was largely wasted on him.

She helped him into the parlor and on the lounge there, then hurriedly dressed and, telling him she would fetch a doctor, hastened from the house.

A block away was a doctor's office. She notified the physician and sped back. But, at the corner, she turned, walked a short distance, and halted in front of a glass window which bore, in white letters: "Western Union Telegraph Office."

She brought from her pocket a slip of paper with a few words pencilled on it. Then she went into the office, and wrote a message.

"J. H. Smith—Bay Side Hotel—Sea Cliff!" read the operator from the yellow blank.

Kate nodded, and gave a sigh of relief as she left the office.

J. H. SMITH, a stocky, little figure, clad in creased crash trousers, flannel shirt and a battered straw hat, clambered from Capt'n Sam's cat-boat to the worm-eaten wharf at the Fish House, Sea Cliff, and reached down for the basket in which, bedded on cool sea-weed, lay five blue fish.

"Ain't they beauties?" he said as he gazed on the trophies of the morning's fishing.

"Purty tol'able fish," agreed Capt'n Sam, the leather-faced, gaunt Jerseyman. "But not much fur six hours a fishin'," he went on. "Pears t' me, Mr. Smith y' 's jess plumb crazy 'bout loafin' 'round a boat, an' trailin' a line. Y'r face certainly is a sight, too. Red 's a beet. Th' skin fairly bilin where 'tain't peelin' off."

J. H. Smith pushed back his hat. "What's th' good of leavin' th' city if you mind such things?" he said.

"What's th' good a leavin' th' city 't all?" asked Capt'n Sam. "'F I lived there, where there's a lot goin' on all th' time, y' bet I wouldn't come down here."

J. H. Smith smiled, and started to reply; but the other continued: "Y' telled me, when y' fust come down, thet this wuz y'r holiday, an' y' wuz goin' t' hev a good time. What a y' bin doin'? Gettin' up every mornin' at six, sometimes five, an' goin' a fishin.' "

"Fishing's th' greatest sport there is."

"Mebbe 't is. I call 't workin'. You'm certainly a piece a work y'rself when y' get fast t' one. Sometimes I think y' aint nothin' but a boy growed up an' got a sprinklin' a gray hairs."

"There's worse things than bein' a boy, ain't there?" J. H. Smith replied.

Capt'n Sam went on, oblivious to the query, "Yes, y' certainly ain't no better 'n a boy, lots a times I think y' ain't nothin' but a boy growed up an' got pulled overboard by thet blue fish. I swear t' man, I never seed such a sight. You a yellin' t' me t' pull in th' fish an' not t' mind you; an' a spoutin' water an' slappin' with y'r hands like as y'd drown fur th' durned fool y' wuz, refusin' t' ketch holt a th' pole I poked at y'."

"But we got th' fish, Capt'n Sam, an' it was a corker."

"Huh!" ejaculated the Jerseyman, shifting his quid of tobacco. "Y'd thought 't wuz a corker, as y' call 't, 'f y'd seed th' bottom, I reckon. Y're most gone daffy over y'r fishin', anyway. When y' ain't a hangin' yer legs over th' starn' with a line, y're lyin'

on y'r back on deck with y'r hat over y'r eyes, soakin' in th' sun. That's what you call hevin' a good time!"

"Yes," said J. H. Smith; "I call that a very good time. Besides, there's lots to see. It's piles of fun, watchin th' gulls and beach-birds, teetering along on th' sand, and th' clouds and th' water. And it's mighty comfortable to come back in th' evenings, and sit on th' porch and just—loaf."

"Sho!" exclaimed Capt'n Sam. "An' y' call thet fun? Say, now straight, y're a queer feller."

"Am I?"

"Y' certainly are. I wisht I wuz livin' in th' city. I'd show y' how t' have a good time. Y' bet, I'd hev somethin' more excitin' t' do 'n goin' over t' th' village a evenin's, er up t' th' hotel. There's nothin' going' on here'bouts."

"There's politics! They say you've got a hot fight on. Ain't politics exciting?"

Unwittingly J. H. Smith had unbarred the flood gates of Capt'n Sam's scorn. "Politics!" he exploded. "I'd be purty hard up, I guess, b'fore I stuck my nose into them. A pol'tician 's a good bit like a skunk. Looks inn'cent 'nough till y' tackle him. Everybody wants t' kick him, an' nobody dassent."

J. H. Smith roared. "You must have had a hard time with th' politicians you met."

"Never met one—thet is a big one," his companion replied. "An' I don't want t'. But I've

read pieces 'bout 'em in th' newspapers, an' thet wuz 'nough. I ain't got no time fur 'em. They're a lot a bad eggs! They's not one on 'em as ever did a solid day's work, I reckon. Jess get t'gether, an' fix things so as other folks 'll do th' work fur 'em, an' smoke seegars, an' drink rum, an' wear plug-hats, an' make jokes 'bout th' fools thet's round 'em. Oh, they ain't no blinkers on this hoss! I know what pol'ticians 's like."

"I should think you did!" J. H. Smith remarked. Then, after a pause, "Say, Capt'n Sam, what kind of a politician do you think I'd make?"

"You! You!" Capt'n Sam chuckled. "Now, thet's good! You a pol'tician? I'd like t' see you a tryin' t' be a pol'tician, I swear t' man! I'd like t' see y'. Say, don't y' ever get no sech idea into y'r head. 'F y' do, I'll—I'll—well, I'll jess come up t' y' an' I'll say, 'Blue fish 's runnin', Mr. Smith!' Thet'll be 'nough. Y' 'll drop pol'ticianing right off. You a pol'tician! Why, you'd hev 'bout 's much show agin them fellers as a mack'rel agin a shark."

"I'm glad you told me," said J. H. Smith. The twinkle in the blue eyes informed the Jerseyman that he was not offended. "Well, I got to be going on up to dinner," he went on. "I'll see you to-morrow morning—at seven, Capt'n Sam."

He picked up the basket of fish, and started along the sandy, shell-strewn road which wound back

among the salt meadows from the Fish House to the Bay Side Hotel on the ocean front. "And so politicians are skunks! And I'd have no more show with them than a mackerel!" he repeated to himself. He seemed to relish the reflection.

He was still in enjoyment of it when he stepped on the porch of the Bay Side Hotel, and put down the basket. But his smile faded away as a tall, thin woman came to the door, and extended a yellow envelope. "Came this afternoon! Th' boys brought it over with th' mail," she explained.

"Much obliged," he returned. "I guess, it ain't very important. Here's some fish. I'll come right in to dinner."

He took the yellow envelope, and walked to the end of the porch. A moment he stood, his gaze wandering over the crescent of the beach which curved until its line was lost in the soft haze; over the breakers, tumbling in, laced with foam; over the sparkling water beyond. He stepped into the flood of clear sunlight which bathed sea and land, and took a great draught of salt air, and stretched his arms.

"Awful hard luck to leave it!" he said in an undertone.

Then he gave himself a shake, and tore open the envelope. A glance took in the words written on the yellow blank within, but not their full significance. He looked at them again, and told himself that the

telegraph operator had made a bad mistake. Next that Kate's fears had run away with her judgment. Then, that the telegram was intended as a joke. But he read it again and again, and began to recall things which made him believe in the message.

No one would dare to joke in this way; Kate was the only one who had his address—Kate was clear-headed and reliant; Walsh was not without a motive; last of all, "Jimmy" had become "J. H. Smith," and, for a week, had been miles away from the city. Yes, many things might have happened in this "Jimmy's" absence!

The facts were probably about as they were outlined on the sheet of yellow paper.

Suddenly, the sea-line seemed to be wavering; and Jimmy—for "J. H. Smith" had been swept from existence by the telegram—put a hand on the porch post. His forehead was wet and cold, but only for the briefest instant. The next, he had folded the despatch neatly, put it into his pocket, and was walking the length of the porch with short, quick strides. His hands had closed tightly, his lips were pressed together, his chin was thrust a little forward. Up in the city they would have recognized these as signals not to be misunderstood.

Three times Jimmy paced the porch, then walked into the house. He called to the landlady. "I'll leave in ten minutes! I must go to th' city! Have th' wagon ready for me!"

“Lord save us, Mr. Smith! Y’ weren’t goin’ for a week, y’ said? Y’r dinner?”

“I’ll leave in ten minutes. There’s a train from Plainville at one forty-five. Remember—th’ wagon and my bill!” He turned and was at the top of the stairs before the woman could reply.

At seventeen minutes of two o’clock he stepped into the railroad telegraph office at Plainville, and rapidly wrote a dispatch. Five minutes later, in a seat in the smoking car of the one forty-five train, he lighted a cigar, and seemed to find in reading the telegram to J. H. Smith food for much cogitation.

But, the moment the train came to a stop in his city, his mood of rumination dropped from him like a cloak. He darted into a cab, and gave the driver an address and an order to hurry. In ten minutes he was alighting at the side door of a small building over whose wicker-door at the front swung a gilt sign adorned with the name of Matthew Casey.

Mat opened the door, and had him inside in a jiffy. “As I hope t’ see hivin! I’m glad y’ve come,” he exclaimed. “Fur there’s hill t’ pay, an’ thet’s no loie.”

Jimmy grasped the Irishman’s hand. “Come on, and be quick!” he said. “Th’ parlor will do. Tell them to let nobody in. I want to know everything first, and nobody to know I’m here.”

Mat led the way into the little front room, pulled

down the blinds, and locked the door. "Mrs. Casey's on guyard," he said. "'T 's over her did body they must come t' see y'. An', now, I'll till y' all thet I know."

Then he told of the rumors he had heard, of the meeting in Showell's office, and of how he had tried to get a message to Mrs. Doran. Then he went on, with an attempt at self restraint which was so palpable that a fleeting smile hovered on Jimmy's face;

"But th' sicond toime Oi saw Mishter Doran there wuz an onplisant occurrence. 'T came av his on-handiness on his feet. As he wuz not prissin me wid invitations t' see Mrs. Doran, which same Oi wuz decided on,—misdoubtin' thet his mimory had failed him r'gardin' th' delivery av th' missage t' her—Oi tried, purlite loike, t' introjuice mesilf 'nt' th' house. Thin, he praceedin' me an' Oi followin', some way he gave me a shove. 'T's not a blow Oi will call 't, fur shame av th' results; but 't's none th' less thrue, thet Oi fill against th' dure, an', git-tin' up, grabbed a holt av somethin', t' stiddy mesilf, which, later, Oi discovered wuz his neck. So, in th' dark, neyther wan av us bein' shure av where th' other wuz, we b'gun t' feel wid our hands. An' mine wuz shut loike—fur fear av brakin me finger nails. 'T wuz be th' same token thet Oi begin t' push out wid me hand agin an' agin—quite gintle-loike, y'll understhand, an' he begun t' holler, an' push out wid his

hand in th' same way—me a holdin' ont' his neck all th' toime, y'e see—forninst his fallin' down, an' hurtin' hisself. 'T wuz will Oi did th' same, too; for, prisintly, whin Oi pursaved thet his intintion wuz t' show me thet 't wuz too late t' be comin' in, Oi let go, an', sthaightway, be some coinceedence, he fill on th' flure, a yellin' an' a groanin'. An', thin,—an', thin—Oi come away—seein' me pursasions wuz av no avail an' me intintions misunderstood."

Jimmy's eyes were glistening. He found no fault with Casey's loquacity. Even his anxiety was not proof against the unction which underlay those apologetic words; and he registered a mental vow of indebtedness to the Irishman. But time was pressing, and he fell to questioning Casey upon succeeding events.

It was half an hour later that Jimmy, after a silence of several minutes, said, "Well, Mat, it looks as if they had us this time, sure enough! I didn't think Showell had th' nerve to do this. Maybe, I can convince him, even yet, that he ought to change his mind. But Walsh—? Well, I was only a year or so out on him. Now, what are we going to do?"

Casey's face was a network of wrinkles. Then the beginning of a smile whisked them away. "There's wan thing we moight do," he replied. "Retoire frum the soight av an ongrateful public t' th' ase an' comfurts av privut loife?"

"Which," returned Jimmy; "is th' one thing we won't do, yet—eh?"

Casey's smile widened.

"You gave those messages I telegraphed you?" went on Jimmy.

"Oi've not caught up wid mesilf since Oi stharterd home frum deelerin' th' last wan av thim."

Just then Mrs. Casey rapped on the door. Casey opened it cautiously. Mrs. Casey stepped inside, and closed the door. "O'Rourke says," she announced; "thet's there's a gintl'min in th' barroom thet won't drink ixcipt Mat 's prisint."

"'T's th' first av th' min y' bade me till t' come here," elucidated Casey. "There's a back-dure, frum th' bar-room in here, an' I tould them t' prisint thim-silves at th' bar. 'T would avoid publicity wuz me idea."

Jimmy nodded. "You didn't fail me, Mat," he said. "See who it is, and bring him in here if he's all right."

Casey slipped out, and shortly returned with a big man with hawk nose and searching eyes. Jimmy grasped the newcomer's hand. "I'm glad you came, right off, Morley," was his greeting. "Pratt will be here soon, I expect, and Duane and Jones. Then, we'll be able to come to an understanding, if that's possible. I suppose, you know where I stand?"

Morley, who was one of four men who practically controlled the minority party's policy within the

city, said he had an idea of the situation. "But not a clear one," he added. "Walsh and Showell didn't think they needed me very badly, I guess. I learned nothing from them. Gans did make some sort of offer, but it wasn't good enough for us. When I told him so, he dropped th' subject right off. They think they're strong enough without our cooperation. Maybe they are."

"Maybe," responded Jimmy; but his tones betokened no dejection. "We'll be better able to say that after we talk things over."

A little later the three other men arrived.

Exactly what went on in Mrs. Casey's front parlor that night no one but the five who were there ever knew. The china pig which squatted on the plush lambrequin held many confidential conversations across the mantel with the china cat. But both of these eavesdroppers were dumb when others were by; and so was the stuffed terrier under the bell-glass at the end of the room which regarded the proceedings with a wise eye. To Mrs. Casey the parlor ever afterward had a mysterious atmosphere. Casey himself spoke of it to his wife as "the Boss's room." But even Casey could make but a shrewd guess as to the precise terms of the preliminary agreement which, at four o'clock in the morning, caused Jimmy to shake hands warmly with each of his conferees, as they left the room and passed out into the gray light beginning to bathe the sleeping city.

Casey had been called into the conference several times to tell what he knew of doubtful points. For the rest of the time he sat in the hallway, and held the post of door guard which Mrs. Casey surrendered at midnight.

When the door had closed behind the last of his visitors Jimmy turned on Casey. There were rings under his eyes and heavy lines about his mouth; his face was more gray than ever Casey remembered to have seen it. But his spirits were high; his voice was hearty and ringing. It fairly made Casey's heart leap by its confidence.

"Mat, everything's going well; but we won't make any noise about it. Th' sign over your saloon door 'll be all th' advertisement of my whereabouts we'll need for a couple of days. If anyone comes into th' bar-room, and will drink with no one but me, do you look 'em over, and let me know. If they're safe, you can bring 'em in here—through that side door. This room is where I'll do business—on th' quiet."

"A sort av spake-aisy?" suggested Casey with a wink.

And a "speak-easy," in one sense, the little room was for the next day and the day after that. Not a great many found their way to it; but none of those who did were barred. Casey's swinging sign was to be read only by the initiated, and the initiated kept its secrets faithfully. So close-mouthed were they

that, two days after Jimmy had arrived, the city at large, and Walsh, Showell and Gans in particular, heard for the first time of his whereabouts. The intelligence was conveyed to them by a despatch printed in a certain newspaper from its correspondent at Plainville. This telegram announced that James Devlin, it had just been learned, had been spending two weeks at Sea Cliff—a forgotten, little watering-place—and would return to his home city that night, his holiday being over.

The next morning, sure enough, Jimmy was seen on the street. He was sun-burned and smiling. Showell purposely kept out of his path. Walsh met him early, on his way to the office.

Walsh's intention was to have the inevitable clash over with at once. He knew that nothing was to be gained now by a few hours postponement of it. Furthermore, while he had no qualms for what he had done, he felt that he would work with easier mind when he and Jimmy faced each other as declared enemies. An encounter with the Boss was not, at any time, an agreeable thing to look forward to. So he braced himself for a collision when he saw Jimmy approaching.

But Jimmy promptly put out a hand and beamed on him. Before he realized it, the Judas got the best of Walsh, and he was saying how glad he was to see Jimmy back again.

"No gladder than I am to get back," returned



Jimmy. "I was having a great time away, too. But, somehow I got to worrying th' last few days. I didn't see a paper while I was away, and I haven't read 'em, or seen any of our people since I got back. But—well, I got to thinking of Gans down there, and wondering if he and th' rest was up to anything, and could—have shut your eye up." He winked at this tremendous joke.

Walsh laughed shortly; and Jimmy hastened to say, "Oh, I know, you can look out for yourself! But you had *my* work to look out for this trip. That must have made it pretty hard. I tell you, I'll not take a holiday again at a time like this. It isn't fair—to you and Showell."

His voice was self-accusing; his face apologetic. Walsh, watching him from the tail of his eye, marveled that he had ever credited him with acuteness beyond the rest of mankind. Walsh cultivated a taste for the philosophy of the cynic; therefore, he found some pleasure in recognizing, in this stage of the covert struggle between Jimmy and himself, a clear demonstration of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest.

"Oh, that's all right," he said, replying to Jimmy. "Your vacation did you good. You've come back, ready to do double work, I daresay. You'll make up for whatever I've done for you."

"You bet I will, old man!" returned Jimmy eagerly. "I never felt in such shape for a scrap as

I do now. I'll even up th' score as quick as I can."

Walsh said he'd see Jimmy a little later; he had an engagement to keep just then. He hastened to Showell. "You'll think you're Jimmy's long-lost brother, when he sees you," he declared. "It's really almost a kindness to knock him out," he added, half in earnest. "He's only fit for retirement."

Walsh laughed over this and at Showell's sickly smile. Showell was not as confident as he might be. But, perhaps, this was only because Showell had not seen Jimmy since the spell of credulity fell upon him; and was sceptical. Walsh himself knew that Jimmy's unsuspecting composure would not survive the day. When Casey had told him of the message he had brought to Marcus, or some one called his attention to the rumors of double-dealing, now so persistent, Jimmy would be deceived no longer. This deception was delightful while it lasted; the outbreak which would follow the awakening would be quite different.

Nor was Walsh mistaken. That same afternoon he met Jimmy on the street, and the explosion which ensued justified all expectations. But, for all that was to be deduced from Jimmy's words and manner at the time of the encounter, no one would have guessed that his discovery of the treachery was now three days old. He informed Walsh of what he had heard, and declared that he could not believe it.

Walsh replied that all he had related was true. He had broken away. "Do you remember an election for Sheriff, a few years ago?" he added. "I haven't forgotten it, if you have. I imagine, we'll be nearly quits on that score when this campaign is finished."

"It seems to me that I do remember something of th' kind," replied Jimmy. "But, I remember, too, that *you* had fair warning before that election that you wouldn't be elected. *I* never lied to you; *you* have lied to me. Much good may it do you!"

After this meeting Jimmy was silent on the subject of his betrayal,—so silent that Walsh was uneasy for several days. He cheered himself by reviewing the situation. Twist this as he would, he could foresee nothing but a crushing defeat for Jimmy.

The entire city was aroused as never before by a municipal election. The count made in advance by the most conservative of political observers showed that those who were supposed to remain faithful to the old régime were out-numbered two to one. Most of the newspapers championed the cause of "reform," as it was called. It was an excellent occasion for the ventilation of highly moral views upon the degeneracy of politics, the oppression of "Bossism," and the might of a "free-born people." Moreover, the gratitude of Jimmy was soon like to be worth little, so far as political advertising in the public prints was concerned. His enmity was something to

which, in the near future, one might be politely indifferent.

One newspaper remained staunch to him; two others preserved a judicial discrepancy between their news columns and editorial pages. This was a sort of sheet anchor which the publishers cast to windward against a sudden veering of the political gale.

The Administration, which owed its offices to Jimmy in large part, exhibited the powers of the chameleon.

Kate read the newspapers with an earnestness that had small reward. She did not understand politics, and cared nothing for them. She had seldom thought of Jimmy as a politician. When she did, it was as a sort of engineer who controlled a machine which never got out of order or did things that he did not wish it to do. Now, she realized, that Jimmy was part and parcel of this machine, and that there was danger of it doing him a serious injury. So, knowing him as she did, she understood that what threatened was bitter to him beyond any words he was likely to speak.

She was terribly anxious. She tried to find out from Jack what the situation really promised, but his replies were vague. He knew nothing about the rumored treachery of Walsh and Showell beyond what was talked of on the street; and this he did not credit. He was sure that Jimmy was all right.

Jack had been away from the house on the night

that Marcus had the encounter with Casey; and Kate had been careful not to betray her knowledge of that night's proceedings. Her part in them was a particular secret. She could not explain to herself just why it was that she was reluctant to speak of what, on the face, was a perfectly natural and proper thing to do for such an old friend. Yet reluctant she always was to confess to Jack that she had any interest personally in Jimmy. It was a diffidence that made her shame-faced at times; and in which, again, she secretly exulted.

It may have been that some of this diffidence was bound up in the treachery of Marcus. She had no feeling for him but loathing, yet she recoiled from the suggestion of exposing him. She acquiesced silently in his lamely-spoken explanation of the cause of the fight between Casey and himself. She apprehended danger in allowing him to know that she had sent the message to Jimmy which he had tried to withhold. Her contempt for him was too deep to be voiced in recriminations. She dreaded an altercation in which he would defend himself by attacking her with sneers and insinuations which would make her cheeks burn.

To be sure, she had received word from Jimmy on the day after she sent the telegram to him. But his response was so meagre that it left her all trembling with uncertainty. She learned from it just enough to strengthen her fears that his danger was

great—so great that he had come privily to the city, and could not call on her now.

Mrs. Mat Casey was his messenger. Mrs. Casey had received guarded directions from Jimmy; and she carried them out in her own way. The fitting of one of those marvelous gowns, which she periodically had made, furnished her with opportunity.

"Mrs. Doran," she asked, as she raised her ponderous arms, and regarded herself approvingly in the mirror; "Mrs. Doran, did y' ever kape a boardin' house?"

"No," answered Kate; "I never did." She answered without thought, and immediately, inquired if the waist-band suited her customer.

"Yis," replied Mrs. Casey, whose mind was on her message and whose heart was begging for attention to the gown. "Yis, 't suits me well 'nough, but,—but fur th' loss av th' parlur."

"Loss of—the parlor?" began Kate in astonishment. Her mouth was full of pins; she looked up at Mrs. Casey. The latter was again lost in admiration of her reflection. "Of your parlor?" queried Kate.

"But Oi'd loike 'f 't had a bit more av a curve-in front," Mrs. Casey said critically.

"More curve in the parlor?" interrogated Kate.

"Curve in th' waisht-band," corrected Mrs. Casey. "Who said parlur?"

"You did," returned Kate. "You said curve in the parlor; but the waist-band was what you meant."

"Av course Oi did," agreed Mrs. Casey. She realized now that she had been enticed from her mission by the delights of her new dress. "'T wuz th' waisht-band Oi mint; but 'twuz th' parlur thet wuz in me thoughts," she went on. "Fur Oi'm kapin' a boardin'-house now."

"Is that so?"

"Yis, an' Oi've got wan boarder thet's a quare man."

Kate made no reply. She was on her knees, adjusting the recalcitrant waist-band.

"He's a short, chunk av a man, wid blue eyes an' a smoile thet would take th' heart out av y', wid 'ts winnin' ways," continued Mrs. Casey.

Kate was still wholly occupied with the dress-band.

"An' he drisses, fur all th' wurruld, loike he wuz a Quaker, instid av th' big man thet he is."

Mrs. Casey's persistence gained her point. Kate's attention was distracted from the dress. "You're talking of your boarder?" she asked.

"Av me boarder; av who ilse? Oi wuz tillin' y' th' kind av man he is. He came t' me, lasht noight, frum a place they call Say-Clip or Say-Click, er somethin' av th' koind. 'T 's on th' say-shore, an' he's bin spindin a wake there. 'T 's

longer he would have spint there, too, O'im afther thinkin', 'f he hadn't bin sint fur, suddint loike."

Kate's thoughts had come to a focus. She looked at Mrs. Casey sharply, but that lady's attention was riveted on the glass. Mrs. Casey rejoiced in a bit of mystery, and she was loth to surrender the privileges of her present office. Kate was balked, but her heart and mind both were now on the suspicion aroused by her customer's last words.

"Was it—Sea Cliff?—Was it Sea Cliff your—new boarder came from?" she asked.

"Oi disremimber entoirely," Mrs. Casey rejoined. "But Oi wisht I c'd go there. 'T must be a beautiful place. Do y' loike th' sayside, Mrs. Doran?"

"Yes," said Kate, and then, quickly, "But this man—your new boarder—what is his name?"

Mrs. Casey assumed an expression of profound cogitation. She began to shake her head slowly. "Now, ain't thet quare?" she said, almost as if to herself. "Thet's certainly quare! Oi can't think av his name. Let's see! 'T wuzn't Jones; an' 'twuzn't Smith, an' 'twuzn't Killy. I'm shure av those. Nur, 'twuzn't Daniel,—nur Dixon,—nur—"

"Was it—was it Devlin?" asked Kate. She bent to pick up some cuttings on the floor.

"Divilin—Divilin? Now, Oi do belave, thet wuz his name," replied Mrs. Casey slowly. She could see only the top of Kate's head; but the tremble of the hand that groped on the floor was detected, and she

added promptly, "Yis, Divilin 'twuz, Oi'm shure. An', now Oi riccolict his front-dure name. 'Twuz James!"

"He's—at your house, you say?" questioned Kate. "I—is that where he usually stays?"

Now, Mrs. Casey knew not over what depths she might be treading; but she did know that these were not of her concern, and that her business was to make her message clear before she left. So she answered plainly, "No, thet's not where he ginirally sthays. He has rooms, av his own, in th' city, Oi b'lave. But this toime he had raisons fur not wantin' his prisince in town t' be known, Oi'm afther thinkin'. At layst, 't 's shure Oi am thet he's not put th' toe av his boot out av th' dure av me house since he came."

Kate raised her face to that of Mrs. Casey. Mrs. Casey tried to retain the mask of placidity, but in vain. A smile crept over her broad visage, her huge frame shook.

"Is that—all you know about this boarder?" inquired Kate. She was smiling also.

"Indade, 't 's all me good intintions t' him w'd permit me t' know."

Kate understood. Mrs. Casey's boarder passed from the conversation; and the fitting of the gown progressed more rapidly.

That afternoon, thinking over the morning's conversation, Kate came to the conclusion that she had

been obtuse concerning the genesis of Mrs. Casey's inordinate appetite for expensive dresses and material appreciation of her (Kate's) skill as a dress-maker.

Marcus did not learn of Jimmy's presence in town until the latter showed himself on the street. But, learning of it, he straightway posted to Jimmy's office, and found the waiting-room there crowded. The door to Jimmy's room was closed. He sat down, intending to be the next one to enter. He had several questions to ask; but, for a wonder, no peremptory demand to make.

In point of fact, Marcus was in a state of uncertainty and apprehension which was as novel as it was irritating to him. The rumors of a break between Walsh and Showell and Jimmy had become so constant and definite that Marcus all but believed in them. But he could not make himself believe that he had been duped by Walsh, as this seemed to indicate. If he had been duped—if he had been cozened into helping to keep Jimmy from the city, and so had aided in preventing his own nomination for Councils—where did he now stand? He cared little for the wrath that must have stirred in Jimmy when Casey told him of that undelivered message; but he cared very much about Jimmy's position in politics. On that now hung his own fate. For Walsh, he perceived, would laugh in his face, if he went to him, asking for anything. It remained to be learned

if Jimmy was powerless to do anything for him. If so—Marcus had not been able to see his way beyond that chance.

As soon as the door opened, he slipped in, unmindful of the call of the man whose turn it was; and shut the door behind him. He slid into a seat. He was nervous, and began at once.

“Is it true about Walsh and Showell and—you?”

“Yes,” said Jimmy. “But drop that! You’ve come to see me about your nomination?”

“Yes, th’ nomination you promised me—th’ one you tried to upset.”

“What’s that?” asked Jimmy quickly.

Marcus repeated his statement. “I got th’ truth from Walsh,” he added, defiantly.

“You—did?” said Jimmy, his voice sinking. A light came upon him. He saw why it was that Marcus had turned against him. He set his gaze on Marcus with an expression of mingled pity and contempt. Verily, the knave had overreached himself for once! In contemplation of this he almost forgot the stroke which Marcus had leveled at him. Aloud, he went on, “So, Walsh told you I’d turned you down—behind your back, eh? Well—” he paused to enjoy Marcus’s anxiety. “I didn’t do it.”

“You didn’t turn me down? I was on th’ ticket,” gasped Marcus. He almost wanted to say that Jimmy lied because it became plain to him that

Walsh had made a fool of him—that ‘Con’ Murray had done the same. That he was—. Where was he? “Then, I’m on th’ ticket?” he asked.

“You *were*,” corrected Jimmy. “But that ticket went up when Walsh and Showell—.” He did not finish the sentence, but said: “You’re *not* on the ticket *now*.”

“Why ain’t I?”

“Because I couldn’t nominate you—couldn’t elect you, if I did.”

Marcus grasped at a straw. He tried to put confidence in his assertion, “I don’t believe you! You’ve said that same before. You’ve got—”

“Hold on!” broke in Jimmy. He knew that to bandy words with Marcus was useless. He tried to make him see the facts, hopeless as the task seemed. “I tell you th’ exact truth,” he said. “I can’t do what you want because it ain’t in my power to do it. You can threaten till you’re blind in th’ face,—it makes no difference. Don’t you know what this fight means? Do you want to be defeated, and knock me out at th’ same time? That’s what your nomination would help to do. Where will you be at, if that happens? Are you a fool as well as—” He stopped short, and stared.

And Marcus could not reply. Every word that Jimmy had spoken struck him with the force of truth. He remembered the incident of the Colonial Club; he realized that ‘Con’ Murray would never

have cut loose from him, if there had been a chance of his election to Councils. He knew that he did not stand well in his own ward. He had an idea which was steadily growing, of the scope of this fight against bossism. Jimmy's desperation, which had made him acknowledge that defeat was likely, was most convincing of all. These things pressed home on Marcus, and, for the first time he did not push his claim.

"Then, what *are* you going to do for me?" he asked doggedly.

"I can't do anything for you—now," replied Jimmy, looking him squarely in the face; wondering, as he had been wondering for two days, how Marcus would take a flat denial.

But Marcus made no threat. He leaned back in his chair, his hands in his trousers' pockets, his eyes slowly reviewing the room.

How Jimmy wished that he might rise up then and there, and declare, "And neither will I do anything for you at any other time!" But he did not dare. He knew that his emancipation was but temporary. It was bought at the price of his power; it would be over as soon as he had gifts to give. Perhaps, even now, he was deluding himself, and Marcus was estimating how much in money he should demand as salve for his disappointment.

An idea of this kind had come into Marcus's mind, but he had postponed consideration of it until another

time. He decided to wait until it should be certain that the usefulness of Jimmy as a political factor was over. Besides, he had definite reasons of his own for not pushing Jimmy too hard.

"I guess you *are* up against th' wall, pretty close," he said with a show of condescension that was inexpressibly galling. "So I'll let up on you. When you get things straightened out, if you do, I'll come in and see you again."

* * * * *

But, in the two weeks that followed, if did not seem as if Marcus was likely, ever again, to have the chance to make use of Jimmy as a man with offices to donate. The lines against Jimmy were drawn tight and hard. His own people of the Water Trust and the ring of "stalwarts" he rallied round him; almost all doubtful elements were attracted into the camps of the enemy. The outlook, just before the nominations were made, caused the betting to be two to one in favor of Walsh and Showell and the Committee of Fifty. Jimmy became grim and taciturn, but made his working days twenty and, often, twenty-four hours each.

And, then, a strange thing began to be whispered about town. It made Walsh knit his brows and breathe anathemas upon his credulity; it administered a check to the boasting of the impetuous members of the Committee of Fifty. But, also, it made most of

these throw themselves into the struggle with greater energy than before.

So, when the primary elections which Jimmy so lately had dominated were held, and resulted, without hitch or dissenting voice, in the nomination of the candidates proposed by Walsh and his allies,—confidence was born afresh among the reformers.

But, a few days after this, the old whisper of strange things to happen was revived with startling distinctness. A week later, it had become a loud voice. Ten days later it proclaimed itself at the primary elections of the minority party. The ticket presented then and unanimously supported was one of compromises, and of names potent with Democrat and Republican alike.

All eyes once more were turned on Jimmy. There was shaking of heads. "Why, half th' men on this ticket," said Walsh to Showell, as he read the list of men nominated at the minority primaries, "Half th' men here are th' same ones that Jimmy had on th' ticket we three set up with him, before he left on that vacation. Damn him!"

Jimmy was beset by reporters. "This ticket of the minority party? What did he think of it?"

"Think of it?" said Jimmy, with his old twinkle in his eyes. "Oh! it's a right good sort of a ticket. I'd call it a—'return ticket.' Anyway, some people say it's th' one that brought me home from th' sea-shore."

JACK DORAN, one arm on the banister, watched a vision in pink and white descend the stairway. Her arms gleamed through the tulle from which rose her gracious neck. Her head, crowned with brown curls, now sedately piled, was held proudly, yet not so high but that a pair of dancing eyes rested on the face turned up to hers. Two long stemmed roses nodded at her shoulder. She waved her fan by way of greeting, a moment later paused beside him, and extended a slender hand.

"Wherefore, so mournful? And at the first dance of the autumn!" she exclaimed. "Dick, here, was afraid you would tell us that the orchestra had struck or the caterer run away with the supper."

"Nothing so terrible as that, Molly," he returned. "If I looked mournful it was because I knew how few dances I was to have with you."

"You deserve an extra one for that; and you shall have it."

"May it be the supper march?"

"I have that," said Dick Gans promptly.

"Then the first waltz?"

Molly consulted the dancing card which dangled from her wrist by a silken string. "That is taken, too," she said. She did not say by whom it was taken, but Dick's complacent smile was tell-tale. "But you shall have the first galop," she promised. "And, if you want another one, Mr. Gravity, you had best speak now or else forever after hold your peace. You see, I am not a bit vain."

Jack took the dancing card. In a half a dozen places he saw the initials D. G. Whatever he thought of this his face told nothing. He pencilled his name opposite three numbers which were unclaimed and which she said he might have.

"So you don't want that extra dance, after all?" she remarked, looking over his shoulder.

"Yes, you know I do, if it is still due me." He initialled another dance number, and dropped the card. "That is a beautiful dress," he added, his eye traveling over it with critical approval.

"Do you like it? I am glad. I wore this especially for you—and the other men."

He continued to regard her with grave pleasure. She turned herself about slowly, holding her chin up. It was a favorite trick. He remembered the first time he had seen her do it. "Very good," he said. "Each view of that gown is better than the one before."

"And the girl?" She looked at him with raised brows.

"The girl is worthy of any gown."

Dick Gans interrupted impatiently, "The music has begun for that waltz."

Molly gave Jack a saucy nod over her shoulder as she moved away. "Be careful or you will be mistaken for chief mourner," she flung back at him.

But his face did not change as he watched her pass through the line of men at the doorway of the dancing room. A faint smile had parted his lips, but his eyes were sober. In evening dress he made a handsome, manly figure. He looked to be twenty-eight; he had but just passed his twenty-fifth year. His face had taken on a strength and seriousness that became it, yet which puzzled some of those who knew him. Even *The Only Girl* had failed to satisfy herself entirely of the reason for this sobriety. It was Jack, as he had always been, polite and heedful of her comfort and pleasure, but Jack with something sitting on his brow which it did not seem should be there. If this disquieted her, it did not lessen her mischievous attempts upon his self-possession.

She, too, had her sedate moments, but these did not subdue her gaiety at other times. Her thrusts were as keen and sure as ever; her intentions, when she willed it, as difficult to anticipate.

But Jack, as the hem of the pink and white gown was whisked out of sight, said to himself, "Molly! Molly! how I wish it could be always as it is to-night!"

It was a strange remark to make of The Only Girl when she was in the company of a man who had annexed more than a fair share of her society for the evening, but, then Jack, in some ways, was a queer fellow. He had done a great deal of quiet thinking in the four months past. Molly had been away for that time at the sea shore, or in the country. He had seen her to talk with but twice since the day in June when he told her about his father. It was his own fault that this had been so; more than once she had asked him to come to see her. His replies had been that he was too busy at the Bank to leave, or that he had agreed to go fishing with another man during his holiday. This last would not have been true if he had written to her any earlier than he did. But it served to remove the temptation which, for all his determination, he would otherwise have succumbed to. It required many sacrifices to be true to his promise to be "just a good friend." Nor was his position changed. Nothing had happened, as nothing could happen, from his point of view, to make his duty less plain. The removal of his father from the pillory on which public opinion had fixed him when he was a candidate for City Councils had not made him any the less his father.

If Jack had not been the healthy animal he was, if his inheritance from his mother had not been a cheerful heart and industrious hands, he would have grown morose. He had passed the days of the sum-

mer in hard work at the Bank and most of the evenings in his mother's company. But he had his rebellious hours.

In the early days of October Mr. Chambers opened his country house, and twice Jack journeyed out there because Molly called him and excuses failed him. As luck would have it, on one of these occasions Dick Gans was also present; on the other he heard things said upon which he placed his own construction. Dick and Molly, he decided, if they were not already engaged, had an understanding which was its equivalent in general opinion. Tom Rowell's scepticism did not dissuade him. Tom had volunteered, "Jack, it's clear you don't know Molly. She'd speak out if that was so. I don't understand her myself—always; but, I'm dead sure, it isn't Dick—now, at any rate."

Jack had smiled. Tom was a good-hearted chap. "I haven't said she was engaged," he returned.

"No, but you think it. Come! I'm not blind, Jack. Keep a stiff upper lip. As for Molly, she thinks a lot of you. That didn't strike you, eh?"

Jack smiled again, but it was all on his lips. His eyes darkened despite his endeavor. "Yes, Molly is a good friend," he said. "I know that." He clapped Tom on the shoulder to show him that he understood that they shared in her good opinion.

But on this night of the dance at the Country Club he could not close his mind to the hopes quick-

ened in him as he watched his Princess come toward him down the stairway of the Club house. Her chaffing words were very precious to him. When he surrendered her to Dick, after his first dance with her, and saw her float away, her head tilted back, saying something in undertones to her partner, he shook his shoulders, and wandered downstairs to the smoking room. Half an hour must elapse before he could claim her again; he did not care to dance with anyone else; he could not stand by and see her with another man. Doubtless, it would have surprised him to learn that these arguments had been used before.

In the smoking room were half a dozen men whom he did not know, and he found himself listening to them while he smoked.

“Well, I see that Devlin’s got one of his old allies back,” remarked one of the men.

“Showell? Yes. It doesn’t surprise me. Devlin’s worth the whole crowd when it comes to cleverness.”

“And Showell’s always after the biggest slice. He worked by Devlin’s side so long that he must have a pretty good idea of what the present fight promises. I’m only astonished that Walsh let his confederate slip through his fingers.”

“Walsh couldn’t help it, or he would,” put in a third man. “Showell, I imagine, got frightened, and concluded that there wasn’t anything in it for

him in sticking by Walsh and the reformers. Devlin *might* win, you know?"

"It's a toss-up," said the first speaker. "Devlin has every man in that Water Works gang behind him. They've only to read the newspapers and posters to find out that the Water Works is a goner if Walsh and the Committee win. The Water Works people are working with a halter round their necks; they're working for their own lives as well as for Devlin. So they're not likely to be scrupulous."

"A good many fellows in City Councils are in the same box," chimed in another man. "But they'll do Devlin's bidding as long as he's boss. After that—out they go. It's a cut-throat game all round."

"And it started," philosophized the first man; "because Devlin used his fist in behalf of a low-lived, miserable hanger-on named Doran."

"I like Devlin for that blow," commented a fourth man. "But just the same, considered politically, he was all kinds of a fool to strike it."

"Well, I don't know. We can't tell what was back of it, between Devlin and Doran, I mean. Now,—"

Jack jumped up, and strode out of the room. He went to the dancing floor.

Molly, radiant and talking rapidly, was sitting in a corner. The music began again. He called her attention to her dancing card. "Yes, this is yours," she said, and they glided away.

Jack did not analyse his emotions as he looked down into her face and felt the gloved hand that rested lightly on his arm. An intoxication swept away harassing recollections. He knew only that he was with her, and wished that they might dance on so forever. But they had traversed the room but twice when she pleaded fatigue. "Besides," she said, "I want to talk with you. Let's find a confidential corner. Or maybe, you have someone else to look out for?"

His face was answer enough. So they explored the gallery and the smaller room adjoining the dancing floor. There were chairs in both places in plenty and more than one inviting corner; but none of them met with her approval. Apparently, she knew just what she sought. They went out on the broad piazza which ran along the front of the building. It overlooked the tennis field, and, in summer, was a favorite place for dining when the sun hid itself behind the hills. Now it was closed in with glazed shutters over which hung crimson curtains. Two big stoves made it genially warm. At the far end a double line of palms and potted shrubbery screened an angle of the wall.

Molly halted instantly. "The very place!" she exclaimed. "Now, get me two chairs, Jack—nice stretchy ones. For I want to be comfortable; I've—danced so much."

With a little backward glance, as if she feared

some one would see her do this daring thing, she parted the foliage. She daintily lifted her skirts, giving a glimpse of a slim, arched instep, and stepped inside. Through the leafy screen she called softly to him, "It's lovely. We will be able to see everybody, and nobody can see us. Hurry, hurry back! And don't forget the chairs—that are stretchy."

He went to hunt for them, but he was almost unconscious of what he did. Mazie Bradford nodded knowingly at him, but he saw her not. He was in a dream. Then, suddenly recalling Molly's fondness for plaguing him, he halted in front of the line of shrubs. Of course,—she had slipped away as soon as his back was turned. He put down the chairs, and would, if he could, have sauntered off without investigation. But, as he halted, the rustle of a skirt and a faltering, little whistle set him right. He picked up the chairs quickly, and somehow managed to put them within the retreat of the whistler. But he bungled badly. Air is an unstable footing, and a guilty conscience does not steady trembling hands.

"Who was it, Jack?" she inquired casually as she settled herself with much arranging of her skirts.

"Who was what?"

"The girl you remembered you wanted to go back to—just now—when you stopped outside?" She went on arranging her gown with little touches, here and there, never lifting her eyes. When he did not answer, she looked up. "Anyhow, I'm not going to

let you go to her—just yet,” she announced. “Sit down, please. It’s polite to do it, you know, when a lady asks your company.”

He sat down. He would have stood on his head, or tried to, at the bidding of that pretty, imperious voice. A delicious languor,—which was not a languor either; for his pulses thrilled and his heart thumped,—took possession of him. Molly and he seemed to be shut off from all the rest of the world. The soft light of a lamp outside filtered through the leafy screen and checkered her gown. He could see the sweet lines of her face in shadow. The music drifted in on them, now and then, through an open window. They could hear faintly a girl laughing at the far end of the porch.

“Now, to pick my crow with you,” Molly went on. “Where were you for the past half hour?”

“In the smoking room.”

“The smoking room? When dancing was going on? And you are so fond of dancing!”

“I don’t care much for it now.”

“Oh, if that’s so, you didn’t miss anything. There was a dance on my card untaken,—a few minutes ago—while you were in the smoking room. But it was just as well; I sat it out with—a man who didn’t smoke.”

A year ago Jack would have asked, “Who?” Now he said, “I’m sorry I wasn’t there, if you’d have let me have that dance.”

"I don't know what I should have done, if you had been there. It was a perfectly *delicious* dance; but, then that man was a fine talker. And you—Well, I don't like to be made to weep at a dance. And you—Jack, why *are* you so changed?"

"Am I? I suppose, I'm getting older. Then, you know, Molly, I'm very much afraid of you."

"Is that the reason you stay away from me?"

"I never do that when I can help it."

"So all my invitations and your vacation, and—

"Came at the wrong time—for me? Yes. It was too bad. You don't know how much I wished—it wasn't that way."

There was a stress in his voice which she was quick to detect, though her suspicions were astray. "Jack," she said quietly; "Jack, those reasons you give aren't any reasons. Haven't we been friends long enough for you to tell me the truth?"

"I've told you the truth," he replied. "I did go on that fishing trip, as you know. I have been very busy at the Bank."

She felt the change in his manner. If there had been light enough she would have seen his mouth tighten. If the light had been on her he would have seen that in her eyes which might have broken down his resolution, and made him pour out his trouble at her feet. His lips were twitching and his hands squeezed the arms of the chair. He was

conscious of intense relief when she said, "I'm beginning almost to hate that Bank. It takes so much of your time—just when I want you—and Tom. Some day I'm coming down there, and tell President—Jimmy what I think of it."

"He'll be glad to have your opinion."

"And go on doing his own way right afterwards. You would do the same. Men are so wrapped up in their old business."

He smiled. "Wouldn't you be 'wrapped up,' if you were interested in your work?"

"Y-e-s, I suppose, I would. It must be good to have something you care so much for—something that you can go ahead in, and build up, and see grow."

"I like it," he said promptly "The Bank means a lot to me."

"You're assistant cashier now, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"And you intend to go on. You're going to be a banker always?"

"Yes, I mean to be."

"It must take a lot of patience. The President is generally an old man."

"I will be President of the Union Bank—some day," he said simply.

She gave a little laugh.

"I mean it," he added. "I'm going to be President."

"I like that," she said with a quick change of manner.

"What? My work?"

"No, your confidence."

He said "Thank you," but he wanted to say much more.

"But you mustn't get conceited," she admonished.

"I'm not," he returned earnestly. "I've made up my mind, that's all."

"Do you get everything you make up your mind to have?"

"Not—al—ways," he answered slowly, checking the impulse which his ambitions and her sympathy had unbound. "But there are some things I mean to do. To be President of the Union Bank is one."

"To be rich is another?"

"Perhaps."

"And to marry some nice girl is another?"

"No, I am going to live with my mother."

There was a brief pause. Then she said, "Jack, I want to meet your mother. I'm coming to call on her."

"Are you? I'm very glad of that. She would like to meet you ever so much. You must come soon. My mother is a great deal to me."

"I know she is. I hope she'll like me as much as I'm sure I'll like her."

"She couldn't help it," he replied.

"And we'll talk about you," Molly went on.

"I'll tell her about your never marrying. Perhaps, she'll tell me who it was."

"Who it was?"

"Who it was that gave you your *congé*."

"No one did that," he said gravely.

"Then, she's married to some one else? I'm so sorry."

Silence.

"Is she married to some one else?"

No answer.

"Is she, Jack?"

"No."

"Or promised—engaged to some one?"

They were playing the "Blue Danube." His pulses throbbed with it. Molly was leaning toward him, her chin was cradled in a hand. A band of light fell across her hair; from the dusk below this yellow ribbon her eyes sparkled. She repeated softly, "Is she engaged, Jack?"

"I—don't—know," he said hoarsely.

"Hasn't she told you—anything?"

"No."

"And you haven't asked her?"

No answer.

"Why don't—why don't you—ask her, Jack?"

"It wouldn't do any good."

"Not if the girl—wasn't—engaged?"

He did not reply.

"Wouldn't it, Jack?"

"No—no, it wouldn't!" he cried almost fiercely.

"Are you—*sure*?" she asked timidly. "Are you *sure*, Jack?"

She waited, but he did not answer. She was still leaning toward him, her lips parted, her eyes resting on a tiny pleat which busy fingers had made in her gown. A minute went by, and suddenly her fingers were motionless, then closed tightly. She straightened stiffly, and gave a little laugh. "What an absurd suggestion I made!" she exclaimed. "The idea of asking a girl if she was engaged! As if she'd tell you! It was foolish."

"Yes, foolish," he repeated, without thinking of the words. She seemed to be angry. He wondered.

"But *you!*—You are foolish, too," she burst out. "You are stupid! *Stupid!* Do you hear? You are *stupid!*" She fairly flung the words at him.

"I suppose, I am," he said. "But I can't help it. What have I done to make you angry?"

"Angry?" She tossed her head. Her face, for an instant came into the light; he saw that her eyes were scornful. He could not understand; for, it seemed to him, that her lips quivered. "I am sorry I was—stupid," he said. "Will you forgive me?"

Dick Gans's voice reached them. "I'm looking for Miss Struthers; this is my dance."

"I think you'll find her in the gallery," replied another voice.

They heard Dick move away. "I must go," said

Molly. "He'll come back here looking for me." Jack started and clenched his hands. "And you haven't got anything more to say to me, Jack?" she asked.

"There isn't anything more to say," he answered.

"Then—the girl we spoke about is very—sorry," she said lingeringly, and parted the foliage of the palms to pass through.

He was rising, his face white. She looked over her shoulder; and, all at once, he was beside her. "Molly," he said. "Molly, won't you give me one of your roses—to keep?"

Her hands went to the roses at her throat, and hesitated. Then, she swiftly loosened one of the flowers, and held it toward him. But she did not release her hold on it. "You can have it," she said slowly; "but you must never, *never* give it to *any one*."

"I promise."

"Except to the girl you are—going to marry."

He nodded. The rose lay in his hand, free.

She stepped through the screen of leaves. Dick Gans came out of the nearest door.

THE spectacle which followed the primary elections in Jimmy's city that autumn was almost unique in American politics. It was that of a body of men, trained for almost anything but what they were at, giving time, thought and energy to the overthrow of an organized political machine, which, for years, had held sway and which had nearly every position of advantage at the start. The aid which the Committee of Fifty got from Walsh, while it was potential, lessened not the suggestiveness of the spectacle. The reform campaign, in the end, would have enforced the same lesson.

Democracy has a latent power, which may slumber or be constrained for almost indefinite periods. Its vitality, at times, may seem to be sapped, and the querulous cries of a few of its professors be mistaken for the dying protests of a once commanding voice. But, so long as democracy obtains in name and form, there is an abeyant force in it which has to be reckoned with. In a day and a night it may assert itself, and strike to the dust those who think they have it bound, a sacrifice on the altar of their

personal ambitions. It realizes, in time, upon the authority and resources which it has within it and which make it ungovernable in the supreme moment.

Its temporal rulers rise and fall by virtue of the capacity which they individually acquire, or lose, to assimilate and direct, or sunder for a while, the units of democracy. They never can disintegrate or permanently emasculate it. They spring from its being; they exist by its approval or indulgence. They are destroyed by its word. Their fate is bound up in the inertia of voters. This inertia, once overcome, the mighty tremble. The inert element is something like a big rock, set firmly in its bed, ruggedly strong; lending negative assistance to those forces which oppose the laws by which it exists; passively permitting itself, at times, to be surmounted. But its foundations it never surrenders. The man who would undermine it, in the end, it crushes in the pit he has digged.

It was this element in the body politic which menaced Jimmy. Whether he had tried to undermine it must remain a point for commentators on his career. The present chronicle can but state that it threatened to crush him, and that Jimmy knew as well as any one that he was in a struggle for his life.

For chronic reformers who wanted an ideal form of government without the work of governing, who believed that "politics" should be a spontaneous expression of the preference of the civic mind, un-

trammelled by party policies, free from the dictation of any man or set of men making a business of leadership—for such reformers Jimmy had little more than contempt. His reply to an inquirer who asked him how he accounted for reformers was, “Too many pegs for th’ holes.” His experience had been to prove that “reforms” seldom came to more than a waste of white paper in the printing of treatises on “The Degradation of the Rights of Citizenship” and kindred subjects.

But they were not chronic reformers who now cried out against his domination of the municipal service. They were men who had allied themselves with the traitors in his camp for a specific purpose. Many of them, to be sure, took no trouble to vote in a municipal election; yet their votes were their own, and not to be reckoned on a ward tally-sheet. Jimmy had referred to these voters when he said, a long time before, “Th’ votes that are afraid of a rainy day are th’ votes that sometimes make you curse th’ sunshine.”

Walsh, on his side, had many difficulties to contend with. The most disturbing of these were the result of the defection of Showell. It was to counteract the disheartening influences which this desertion had upon his personal following that he gave a freer rein to these in the conduct of this uncertain campaign.

The Committee of Fifty had been opposed to any

resort to the customary methods of exciting popular enthusiasm. Walsh with difficulty had made the Committee see that purely literary and oratorical efforts would fail utterly with one class of voters whose support they should have. He forced a reluctant consent to make a torch-light campaign so far as his charges were concerned. His first step, thereupon, was to organize what became known as "The White Umbrellas."

"The White Umbrellas," at the start, enjoyed a more high-sounding and definite title. But, with the quick appreciation of a trained politician who had uncommon native shrewdness, besides, Walsh seized on the popular appellation which part of the equipment of the organization at once earned for it; and, as "The White Umbrellas" it was known throughout the campaign.

The paraders were three hundred in number, each man attired in ordinary street dress, and armed with a white umbrella. Bill Brady who, despite increasing years, remained as active as a cat, led this marching club, and rejoiced in the office and its opportunities. He headed it, as once he had headed a company of troops in the South, with dauntless, challenging front, itching always for a fight, managing to make one often, notwithstanding many cautions. Walsh was apprehensive of Brady's leadership, but was alive to the important alliance which was thereby cemented, and so did not interfere.

Jimmy's men at first, derided the spectacle afforded by "The White Umbrellas." They hurled words of scorn at men whose heads, they declared, were too soft to stand the sunlight. But, by and by, they discovered that even a white umbrella has its uses as a campaign insignia and often makes a capital rallying banner. So trifling are the things which move a crowd! Therefore, Jimmy, who was never averse to borrowing a good idea from the enemy, passed the word that a black umbrella would be supplied to every man among his own followers; and a marching club was formed whose designation became "The Black Umbrellas."

From the day on which this organization appeared on the streets one phase of the campaign was a personal feud between the White and Black Umbrellas. Twice there were clashes which left in the gutters bunches of tangled wires, tattered black and white ribbons and splintered sticks to identify the quondam combatants. But no one was hurt seriously; and Jimmy, who viewed the fights with keen distrust, decided not to call his men off. He was convinced that he would lose many votes by preventing his people from parading. Yet he stood ready to interfere the minute that the thing took on a more violent phase.

Jimmy was as watchful as ever. The general was always uppermost in him. His face, at the start, had been set against physical persuasion in politics;

his opposition to violence survived the temptation to arouse its exponents in his behalf. Whether in this he planned for the future, or was simply determined to remain true to his principles, is not certain. When his ideals were in question, he was inscrutable to everyone but Kate.

Showell was one who had opportunity to know, yet did not know the real Jimmy. Words, to him, were what they spelled. If this had not been so, who can say how much he might have deduced from Jimmy's remarks one night, in that memorable autumn. Showell and another man had been in Jimmy's rooms. At two o'clock in the morning they started to leave.

Jimmy was standing by the window, drawing into his smoke-laden lungs great draughts of the cool night air. Suddenly, he said to the other two, who were taking up their hats: "How many of those fellows out there are really worrying about who wins in this fight? Not many I guess! Yet, it means a lot to them. I wonder if they ain't got th' best end of th' thing, anyhow?"

"A course, they've got th' best of it," grumbled Showell. "We're workin' an' sweatin' while they're sleepin'. I wish I was asleep now," he finished with a yawn.

The other man laughed, and said lightly, "Gettin' tired of politics, Jimmy? It's a first-rate time to lay down an' get out."

Jimmy turned a white face on the speaker. His eyes had none of their familiar sparkle; they held a curious, wishful expression.

“There’s worse things than being out of politics,” he said, dropping the words one by one. Then he turned to the window again. He was looking over the house-tops when the other men left the room.

In one of those houses toward which his gaze was directed on this night sat Marcus Doran, alone, trying to decide what he should do. His action hinged on the outcome of the campaign, now within three days of its close. If Jimmy won, Marcus was sure of what his course should be, and of what he should enjoy. But he was exceedingly dubious of the effect of a defeat. Moreover, this was a catastrophe against which he should prepare. His perceptions were not so dull that he did not realize Jimmy’s extremity. And he believed, with some reason, that the political downfall of the latter would entail his financial ruin. This being granted, he did not intend that Jimmy should be “plucked” before he got the share of the spoils which he regarded as his own. There still remained, however, the question which for several weeks, he had turned over in his mind: Was it wiser to wait, and hazard his chances on the result of the election? Or, while the issue was yet unsettled, strike the blow which must be his last, and secure all that he could thereby?

On this night, as he lounged in the sitting-room

of his home, he reflected on the situation for several hours, and, in the end, decided that he would risk nothing. Jimmy should be made to pay handsomely while he was able to do so.

In his pocket Marcus had a slip of paper which he had discovered in Kate's desk after many roundabout questions and a long search. It was a small bit of paper with a few words scrawled on it, but he believed, with good reason, that it was something for whose return at least three people would give a great deal, if his intentions were known. It had been in the keeping of one person for years. Reflection upon its place of deposit and the ignorance of its guardian caused him much amusement.

With it in his possession at noon on the following day, he walked into the Bank. He spoke through the Cashier's window to Jack, "I'd like to see you out here a moment."

Jack, knitting his brows at this unexpected call and request, came from behind the netted counter. They walked over to a window embrasure.

"I want you to get me th' package that this receipt calls for," said Marcus, tendering the slip of paper.

Jack took the paper, and read what was on it. He identified the handwriting at once, and knew where the package called for was to be found. But that increased his hesitation. "This receipt is in my mother's name," he said.

"Exactly. She gave the package to Jimmy, for me, years ago, as you will see from th' date there."

"She must call for it herself, then, or send a written release."

"No, I don't want her to know anything about it."

Jack folded the paper, and held it out. "Then I can do nothing for you," he said. "It is against Bank rules to do what you ask."

His father was looking out the window, and ignored the extended receipt. "It's what I expected you'd say," he remarked. "And, I suppose, you're right. "But—," he paused, and jerked his head round; "I'm in trouble—a bad hole."

Jack waited for him to go on, but he did not. He had turned away his face again. "What is it?" asked Jack, his voice uncompromising.

"Never mind what?" replied his father. "The thing is th' papers in that package can save me. If I don't get them—"

"Well, what?"

"I'll go to—jail; that's all." He gave a hard laugh. Jack started; his set face grew more pale.

"You don't like th' sound of that eh?" said his father. "It 's th' truth, just th' same. Th' lam-basting I got when I was a candidate for Councils won't be a marker to th' things they'll say if I 'go up' for a couple of years. And you and your tony friends—"

"They are not concerned with this," Jack interrupted swiftly. There was a glint in his eyes.

"All right, leave 'em out. But there's—*your mother*. It *does* concern her a little, I suppose."

Jack started and drew in his breath sharply.

"Yes, your mother," went on his father. "I don't think she'd worry much about me, but it isn't pleasant to have a convict for a husband, and—"

"You don't need to go on. I understand: I have had plenty of chance to learn what it means."

"Then you'd rather get th' package for me? I thought so."

"I can't get the package," Jack returned slowly. "This receipt is Mr. Devlin's personal acknowledgment. The package is in his private box in the vault. He is out of town to-day. To-morrow I might—"

"That won't do me any good," broke in Marcus roughly. "I'll be hauled in to-night. Th' story 'll be all round town to-morrow morning."

"Then I'll get you the money if that will—"

"It won't. It isn't a matter of money. Th' papers in that package are th' only thing that'll save me."

"What are they?"

"What are they?" For an instant Marcus was disconcerted, then a sneer exposed his teeth. "Do you *really* want to know?" he asked.

There was a diabolical suggestion in his voice and expression which was the more terrifying because it left so much to the imagination. Jack recoiled from

vague possibilities. He felt that it could profit him nothing to sound this new depravity. "No, no, I don't want to know what they are," he exclaimed. He did not see the exultation which leaped into the face close to his. He forced himself to say, "But I can't get them for you."

"You mean you won't. I oughtn't to have looked for anything else. I never did anything for you—much." Marcus's cringing self accusation was so despicable that Jack's contempt was not concealed, and his father's temper suddenly got the upper hand. "All right," he said. "Stick to your rules, damn you! But, for all your nice airs, you'll have a jail-bird for a father. And your *mother*,—she'll thank you for helping me to that." He flung about as if to go, though he had no intention of giving up so soon.

Jack who stood with white, set face, staring at the bars which crossed the window, drawing the slip of paper between his fingers, seemed to hear a voice in his ear, "Jack! Jack!" and knew it for his mother's. He wavered, tried to remember his duty to the Bank, and, in an instant, had surrendered to the pleadings of his heart. He looked at his father. "If I get this package for you, will you bring it back here just as you got it?" he said in a whisper.

"Yes, I will," his father answered quickly.

"When?"

"In two days."

"You'll give me your—? You will do that?"

"Yes."

"And you won't say a word to my mother or to Mr. Devlin?"

"Am I a fool? I don't tell your mother anything I can help," he added. "As for Jimmy, don't I want to stand well with him?" There was contemptible truth—brutal candor in his reply.

"Then I will get the package. Wait outside," said Jack. His tones were colorless, weary; but, as he turned to go, he finished with fierce intensity, "If you don't bring back the papers safe—if you ever tell anyone—I'll—" His voice broke with the strain. His father sneered at his retreating back.

Jack walked over the marble flagging, unseeing, unhearing, conscious of a grip upon his heart and of his purpose. He had the receipt crumpled in his hand. He walked straight back, outside the railing and to the little office near the Directors' Room. No one gave him more than casual attention. It was known to them all that he stood close to the President and did many errands for him of a personal nature.

And Jack did stand close to Jimmy—so close that he knew just where to put his fingers on the duplicate key which hung beside the desk before which Jimmy had sat a few hours earlier. He took the key, and went toward the big vault.

No one was within it and no one near. In the

corner of the vault he found the tin box which he sought. The incandescent light that swung from the vault ceiling made the letters on the end of the box stand out boldly. They were the initials of—! He paused, and drew back his hand; then inserted the key in the key-hole of the box with shaking fingers. A step on the tiling outside made him hurry. He picked out the package which he easily identified, jammed in into his pocket, closed the box, locked it and shoved it back into its place.

He glanced at the doorway of the vault. No one was looking; the men whom he could see at their desks had their heads bent over their books. He walked out of the vault and to the door of the Bank with such appearance of unconcern as he could muster.

Just beyond the steps outside his father waited. Jack shoved a large, brown envelope, tied with tape and strapped with rubber bands into the latter's hands.

Marcus satisfied himself by a glance into the envelope that it held what he desired. Then he put it into the breast-pocket of his coat, buttoned up the coat, and fixed on Jack a pair of eyes that were gleaming with something that made the younger man shake as if palsied.

"It's all right," he said. "You've done your father a good turn." He wheeled forthwith and

walked down the steps and up the street. Jack, staring at him, suddenly made a step, and opened his lips. But, then, he halted, and the cry died in a hoarse whisper, "Wait!"

IT was the night of election day. The stars from their arch of purple looked down upon a city which was a blaze of lights, surging with crowds, roaring with shouts and cheering. The polls had closed; the counting of the ballots was proceeding. Official announcements of the results came in slowly. The most sanguine on both sides conceded that the outcome of the election was in doubt.

The thousands who swarmed on the streets had voted and were eager to learn the result. Two great streams of men poured up and down town on the popular thoroughfare, moving because they had so long stood still, calling to one another in sharp voices strained with excitement, harkening to every rumor that passed from lip to lip, clustering around some curb-stone orator to listen to his harangue and chaff or give him mock applause. Few cared whence they went so long as they were on the streets and at hand to see what was to be seen and hear what was to be heard.

Most of the shop windows on the street level were boarded up. From the upper story windows looked down many women and men; others clung to cor-

nices, and fought good-naturedly for places on the steps. Electric lights everywhere cut sharp circles of white on the pavements. The political clubs were illuminated from top to bottom. On their fronts, or suspended across the street, were huge transparencies and banners which, for weeks, had called on all good citizens to rally round the men whose names and portraits they bore in glaring colors. From the tops of these buildings and from upper windows burned red fire; now and then, a roman candle spouted colored stars upon the crowds.

The Union Club, biggest of all these clubs, was packed with men. It hummed like a great hive. The silhouettes of men passed and repassed the broad windows. Occasionally, a man in the windows recognized an acquaintance among the passers-by, and called to him to come up. A dozen accepted the invitation, and there was a rush on the club door-keeper. A shout of "Fight!" brought five hundred men about the spot in ten seconds. When the struggle was ended, and the invited had gained entrance or was forced away, those on the outside pressed hard for a while on the circle about the doorway, and gaped and asked questions; then were caught in an eddy of the human tide, and whirled away.

A shower of "dodgers" from some hand fluttered down upon the heads of the crowd; and a hundred necks were craned, and there was much pointing and guessing and scrambles for the circulars.

But it was down-town, around the newspaper buildings, that the crowds were thickest and almost immovable. For half a block on either side of these buildings not a foot of open pavement was to be seen from above. In front of the newspaper offices, twenty feet in air, were stretched great sheets at an angle. On these, from time to time was thrown, in sprawling black letters, the message of a stereopticon within the building. Now it was:

“Six Divisions—Twelfth Ward—give:
Committee of Fifty, 758; Opposition,
562.”

Or--

“Sixth Ward likely to give: Committee
of Fifty majority more than 800 votes.”

Or—

“Walsh claims Ninth Ward by 400 votes.”

With the appearance of each of these announcements a floor of black hats on the street level became a sea of white faces, then hats were thrown up, a roar came from the crowd. Men shook hands with one another, and danced impromptu jigs, or whooped for joy, or wagged their heads, and said, “It’s a lie!” or “What rot!” Some turned to strangers to say, “Do you see that? What did I tell you?” “Can’t beat us!” or “Wait! Wait a while! It’s not over yet!” “Don’t get gay too early in the day!”

Between such paroxysms of delight or disgust they laughed shortly, or shouted jokes, or cheered as some cartoon or the face of a popular man slid into the disk of light on the suspended sheet. A picture upside down was an exquisite bit of humor; the edge of a view darkening the screen and withdrawn before it could be read drew out a long "O-o-h!"

For more than an hour these crowds had stood and waited and watched, and steadily grown larger, —jostled by newcomers squeezing their way to better positions, surging forward and back in great waves that no one could withstand and no one seemed to start; swearing, now and then, but always good naturedly. The fighting was left for other places and other men.

A few of these other men, some of them with printed muslin badges on their breasts, some with brass-buttoned uniforms; but most of them without either, still clustered about the polling places where, since early morning, they had been at work.

Theirs had been no easy day. Prowling the length of a block, scanning every approaching figure; watching one another, helping a voter to a decision, now by a quiet conversation at one side, now by more material means of persuasion; crowding away some skulker by threats or fists or both; sending carriages at a gallop to fetch tardy voters—thus had passed the time for them.

In a few places where this was the day's routine there had been more violent scenes. Once there was an angry altercation, a rush of three men, a flash of steel, a groan and a fall. Then a scuffle with a blue uniform in the storm center; afterwards, a furiously driven wagon, clanging its gong at approach and departure. In another place a curse and a blow had prefaced a pistol shot and the summons of an ambulance, before which the crowd divided, behind which it swung together and pressed about the white-jacketed surgeon as he bent, and did his part.

But these were but incidents—the outcroppings of passions which the warnings of ward leaders had not been able to suppress wholly.

A struggle far more lasting and desperate in purpose went on within the polling places. There, about long tables, sat the men who scanned the voting checklists, and handed out the ballots, and watched the little curtained boxes where other men signed political death-warrants with a black cross. Here were the resolves of weeks carried into effect; here were friendships rewarded; here old debts paid; here old scores paid; here contracts fulfilled. In these hundreds of little boxes, scattered the length and breadth of the city beat the political pulse of a million people; and, with every throb almost, the heart of some man was made to leap with joy or ache with disappointment.

When darkness had come down, the polling places held only those who were counting the ballots; and no one could say which side had the better of it. At ten o'clock the result was as uncertain as when the polls closed.

The voting had developed a rare feature. There had been but two tickets in the field, and a few wards were known to have gone one way or another by safe margins. In three-fourths of the remaining wards the fight had been waged with uncommon stubbornness.

The Campaign of the Committee of Fifty, curiously enough, had had its most conspicuous success in parts of the city which, it might have been thought, would oppose all efforts at political reform. On the other hand, several of the wards whose inhabitants were mostly of the refined class had refused to abandon the cause which Jimmy and the minority party seemed to them to represent.

Such idiosyncracies are what make an election interesting to the betting man. In the present case, they confounded the Committee of Fifty; strengthened Walsh in his private opinion that the vitality of reform would not long survive his prospective antagonism; and made Jimmy's glistening eyes eloquent, as he sat with Showell, and got the returns by a system which outdid in despatch the normal methods employed by the reformers.

It was Jimmy's hour of physical rest. For thirty-

seven of the past forty-eight hours he had been on his feet, or actively engaged in consultation and the giving of orders. Just before the closing of the polls he had begun a final round of the voting places where it appeared that his presence and a judicious word might urge obedient servants to extra endeavor, stiffen the wavering, and warn those who plotted treachery. For there are divers ways of improving on a system of arithmetic when it comes to the reckoning of votes. All the judges of election, inspectors, clerks and peace officers in the world may not prevent the use of this improved arithmetic under certain circumstances. Seals may be duplicated, ballot boxes may open to deft fingers, even ballots may develop at will damning discrepancies in the marking, or vanish in thin air, along with their stubs,—when the right parties are in charge of the undertaking. Nor was Jimmy blind to the advantages and disadvantages accruing from such legerdemain. With him, an election was something to be won.

So there were disputes and recounts and again disputes behind many barred doors. Again and again, to impatient inquiries, came the response, "Not yet ready to report."

Where Jimmy sat men came and went without pause. They were excited or affected with an indifference that was transparent. They said a few hasty words or showed sheets of paper. Sometimes

they gesticulated and made loud remarks, and swore. Those around laughed at the jokes with little dry, disjointed barks. Nerves were pulled tight. The air seemed to crackle; suppressed voices smote sharply on the ear. Men puffed on cigars long since extinguished. They slapped one another on the shoulder, and put aimless questions which no one answered.

Only Jimmy sat back in his chair, one short leg hooked over the other, his fingers rolling a pencil, his face white, but unmoved. He was not smiling, but his eyes were feverishly bright. They stabbed each new-comer's face, and often extracted his message before he could speak it.

Then entered Mat Casey, his face glowing, stuttering in his haste and joy.

"'Tis ours! 'T's th' iliction we've—we've—won!" he cried. "Oi've come frum th' Tinth; Kelly says 't 's safe! An' th' Twilfth's ours, too! An' th' Sixth, an' Four—Four-teenth, as will."

Jimmy's leg came down, and he leaned forward. It seemed as if a burst of sunlight radiated from his face. Casey stumbled on.

"'T's al—almost certain av 't Oi am. 'Th' Thir-rurd Ward 's comin' 'nt' loine; an' th' Fifth an' th' Twintysic—sicond 's— loikely! 'Th' Black Umbrellas' 's agatherin'! They's goin' t' par—parade! They won't wait! 'T's—"

Jimmy's momentary exultation had vanished. His

eyes were searching, demanding. "And th' Nineteenth? th' Twenty-third? Eleventh? Thirteenth? Second? First?" he rattled off.

Casey checked the Wards named on his fingers. "Nobody knows 'bout them—yit," he said reluctantly. "They's sthille at th' countin'."

"And th' Seventh and th' Eighth?"

Casey shook his head. "No change yit!"

Jimmy straightened up. His voice was sharp. "It's too early, then. We must hear first from th' Nineteenth and th' Eleventh, anyhow. Find out about th' Nineteenth! Tell Morley, as you go up, that I'll be with him in less than half an hour. Be quick!"

Casey, with the last word, was at the door. Jimmy already was reading a message just brought in. His brows were wrinkled and the pencil tightly gripped. For fifteen minutes messages poured in on him faster than ever, by word of mouth, writing and telephone. With each one his face grew more stern. The last one he threw on the table, and sat a moment, silent and motionless. Then he turned on Showell.

"Th' Eleventh and Thirteenth Wards are going against us," he said. "Th' Seventh looks as if it would go th' same way. I must see Morley—at once. Look out for things here! You know where I'll be for twenty minutes. Call me up—quick,—if you need me."

The door opened and shut; he was gone. A cab was at the door. He spoke to the driver, leaped into the vehicle, and was rattling along to the headquarters of Morley, the minority leader.

He came out of the latter place, half an hour later, and halted on the door-step. Over the roof of a building nearby soared a fiery trail which curved, stopped and dwindled to a point, then burst into a shower of green and blue and red and yellow comets which spread and fell into the darkness. A great yell was borne faintly to his ears from where a pale light was reflected on the leaves from a multitude of arc lamps.

Jimmy watched the falling stars until they had disappeared. As the echo of the shouting died away and swelled again he took off his hat, and passed his hand across his forehead. He buttoned up his overcoat with fingers that fumbled. His face was grim—grimmer for the wraith of a smile which flickered and was gone.

Then he drew a deep breath, and walked away. At the first corner he turned into a street that was empty. His hands were thrust into his pockets, his head a little bent. So he walked, almost unconscious of the direction he took, until half a dozen blocks had been covered.

At this corner he looked up, struck by some familiar landmark; and, half a block away, his glance fastened on one of a row of two-story, brick fronts.

It seemed to him as if there was a brass plate, shining on the window sill there. Perhaps, it was to make sure of this that he continued to gaze at the house. At least, the grimness melted from his countenance and a soft light suffused it. When he swung about and walked on it was almost as if he did it against his will.

Two blocks along he cut into a tiny street, and saw a man approaching him. It was Marcus Doran, and the first look showed Jimmy that the other was drunk. He hesitated, then started on, skirting the curb line, to give Marcus a wide berth.

But Marcus, when close to him, stepped sideways, and blocked the way. "I know where you've been," he said. "You've been to see—her! She and you—"

He did not complete the sentence. Jimmy gave him a quick push. "If you take her name in your dirty mouth, I'll knock your teeth down your throat!" he exclaimed. His eyes were aflame, his jaw set; he threw back his arm to strike.

Marcus, in a drunken fury, tried to reach him; but his foot caught on a carriage block, and he stumbled and fell on the pavement, cursing.

Jimmy looked down on the sodden figure, then spat on the ground in disgust. "I'll give him six months more at this rate," he said.

Ten minutes later Jimmy halted a man who was hurrying by him. The sound of a band playing a

march and of cheering came from a distance. "Who's that parading?" he demanded.

"'Th' White Umbrellas!'" was the answer. "They're bound down town. 'The Black Umbrellas' are paradin', too. There'll be some fun when they meet." The man flung the last words over his shoulder as he ran on.

Jimmy instantly started in the same direction and tumbled into the first carriage he came upon. "Down town! As fast as you can go!" he cried.

"The White Umbrellas" were indeed "out." Whatever Mat Casey might have thought to the contrary, to them the election was as good as won for Walsh. Even while Jimmy was talking to Morley they had begun to march.

Four hundred strong they started from their clubhouse, and, with recruits from allied organizations, had seven hundred men in line when they reached the lower part of the city. They were led by a brass band, and carried torches—a heavy stick, surmounted by a swinging can of oil which made a pillar of smoky fire to mark their march and a handy weapon with which to enforce their possession of the highway. With illuminated signs and banners they marched through two of the principal streets, accompanied by a cheering, hooting crowd of boys and men. And no one disputed their passage.

But some of them were drunk with more than enthusiasm and some of them were anxious to do more

than arouse sympathy for their cause and celebrate their alleged triumph. There was fighting blood in plenty under those white umbrellas. The men ached for a chance to work off superfluous energy. So it happened that when they reached the broad street down-town which separated Jimmy's stronghold from the Twelfth Ward, where Brady still asserted himself after a fashion, there was trouble.

Long before, word had reached them that "The Black Umbrellas" were also "out;" and were to march up-town in force, crying aloud the victory which they claimed, sweeping the streets from curb to curb with their rejoicing ranks. Burning with desire to meet and squelch the counter demonstration, "The White Umbrellas," at the double-quick, crossed town, and made for the street up which their rivals were coming.

Thus it happened that, at the moment Walsh's following swung by tens around the corner of this street, Jimmy's men, two blocks further down, were approaching, five hundred of them, carrying lighted torches, transparencies ablaze, fireworks shooting stars into house fronts—a roof of black umbrellas covering them all. A band was in the van; a tailing of hangers-on yelled and helped to make the thing a "go."

An old Water Works employe, a veteran of a hundred rough-and-tumble fights, led the column. When he saw the lights of "The White Umbrellas" a

gleam of savage delight wrinkled his countenance. Then he checked his desires, remembering Jimmy's orders, cut down his marching front to five men, and took one side of the street. If the other crowd attended strictly to its own business, he told himself, there would be no fight. In his heart he knew that this was like drawing a chalk line between two bulldogs. Behind him every man grasped his stick tighter. A chorus of derisive cries went up from both sides.

It was the call to battle. Brady, in a carriage, surrounded by a hundred of his faithful bullies, followed the last line of "The White Umbrellas" on this night, and, as soon as he saw the illumination ahead, he was out of the carriage, and to the front, ready to uphold the honor of his procession. It was an ill-aimed Roman candle which gave him the chance he hunted for.

A dozen files of the rival paraders had passed each other, and the worst had been cat-calls, rough jokes and a few curses. Then, came that ball of red fire sputtering into a line of white umbrellas, and the hour of action was arrived.

The men hit yelled, and the nearest of them struck out with their torches. Immediately there was a rush from all sides. White and black umbrellas were furled or thrown down. With torches clubbed the men fell on one another. Brady and his bodyguard were at

the fore at once, and bore back "The Black Umbrellas" to the pavement.

Then came the employes of the Water Works to the rescue. Fifty hard-handed, hard-headed fellows, whose joy in fighting was greater than all else, threw themselves with savage lust upon the lunging, swaying mob of men, split it up, and drove the fragments to the street.

Brady's voice rose, hoarse and maddened, above all others, "Give 'em hell, boys! Smash 'em! Smash 'em!"

And back came the challenge of the old Water Works captain, "Pound th' life out uv 'em! Give 'em one fur Jimmy! Show 'em how we do with traitors! Whoop her up! Whoop her up!"

Like a pack on the heels of their leader, the Water Works men plunged into the unbroken ranks of "The White Umbrellas" just behind. Brady's forces rallied and turned on the foe. From all sides, the opposing forces closed in. A yelling, cursing, fighting throng of a thousand men surged back and forth. Transparencies were pulled down and trampled upon, hats smashed, coats ripped from backs. Here and there, a burning stream of oil marked the spot where a torch had burst with a blow and taken fire.

The crowd of onlookers, who had been shouting with the loudest, were borne back against the build-

ings on either side, or sent flying up and down the street. The half dozen policemen who ran to the spot, were swallowed up by the maw of the mob, then spewed out, clubs gone, uniforms in ribbons.

Here a man cried out for mercy; on the fringes of the press crippled figures came into view, crawling on hands and knees into the open air. But mostly they fought and cursed and fought again. All thought of political differences was out of mind. It was a maddened desire to pay back a blow given that drove men into the thick of the mob; once there, they strove to save themselves and make their mark on the nearest enemy. Bloody faces were often the target for friend as well as foe.

It was at this juncture that Jimmy leaped from his carriage at the nearest corner, and came upon the outskirts of the crowd ringed about the fighters. Under the electric lamps the spectacle was clear to the vision. He jumped on a carriage block and ran his eyes over the mob. He halted, uncertain how to begin the task before him. Stopped the fight should be at once, he was determined. But how? He knew, once he threw himself into it, he would be but one of them—a straw in a whirlpool. To shout to them was to waste his breath. The roar of their yells and the struggle deadened every ear.

Then, one of his own men was flung bodily out of the press at his feet, and he had his cue. He sprang upon the man, and grasped his arm.

“No more of this!” he cried. “It’s got to stop, right here! Pass th’ word round! I want every man of mine—in line—about me—there!” He pointed down the street.

The man he spoke to scrambled to his feet, and stood, dazed, irresolute. Then he saw it was Jimmy. His leader’s flashing eyes decided him. He ran to do as he was bid. Jimmy already had sprung to another of his men, and was giving him his orders. And then another was brought to a sharp halt and sent into the crowd with his word, and another. These men fought to make themselves understood; again and again, the word they bore was heard but to be driven from mind by a crashing blow. But steadily they kept at it; and the ranks of the non-combatants grew. The news passed swiftly through the crowd now, “Th’ Boss ’s here! We’ve got t’ stop!”

Soon, Jimmy stood the center of a hundred panting, bruised and bloody men, who glared at the fighters, and made feints to plunge into the mob once more. Two hundred feet away the struggle still went on, but dwindled fast. The word had gone round; Jimmy’s men were flocking to him from every side. In five minutes more Brady’s bullies were hunting for adversaries. Jimmy stood in front of his people, and made short work of every attempt to renew the fight.

But a score or more of infuriated fellows pounded

one another. In one spot four men fought, and above their heads rose and fell the handle of a torch. For an instant the four men were separated a little, so that the swinging club had play. In that instant it drove down with terrific force on an uncovered head. The man it struck threw up his arms, and fell at full length.

Then came the cry, "Police! Th' cops! Th' cops!" A charging squad of blue coats bore down upon the scattering fighters, and sent them flying.

The two lines of quondam combatants fell back, and uncovered a wide stretch of pavement. Men, here and there, sat on carriage blocks or curbstones, and held their heads and groaned. A dozen lay prostrate and were ministered to by companions, or hauled to their feet and dragged away.

But from the little knot of men who had clustered about the spot where that torch had been swung so savagely there came a cry. It was a cry for help, in a strong voice. Jimmy heard it, and his heart sank. He thought he had come in time to save all but a few broken heads and bruises. That cry told him of his mistake. For it meant that some one had come upon Death.

With a word to his men to stay where they were, he ran to the spot from which the cry came, and thrust himself through the thickening circle. On the asphalt lay a man, cheek pressed against the paving, his hat beaten down over his head, a trickle

of blood at the corner of his mouth, one arm out-thrown, the other under him, clutching at his shirt. Above his left ear showed the edge of a deep cut.

It was dark here; most of the torches had been lost; the shoulders of those in the circle, bending over, shrouded the outstretched figure.

Jimmy's face was white as he stooped. He undid the man's coat; a packet slipped from the coat pocket under his hand. He picked it up, and put aside the vest, and laid his ear against the breast. He remained bent, listening, until he was sure that there was no heart beat. Then, he raised his head.

"Who is it? Don't you know?" he asked.

No one answered. He called for a torch. The police were driving back the crowd. A torch was passed over the circle. Jimmy turned the body on its back. The dead man's face came over reluctantly into the glare of the torch.

It was the face of Marcus Doran.

WAGONS began to rattle over the streets. Their lights bored through a heavy mist like points of glowing metal. The figures of men early astir, loomed gigantic and indefinite. A pale nimbus encircled the electric lamps. Now and then, the raucous voice of some derelict of the streets was raised in an attempt at song, and jarred into abrupt silence by a lurching mis-step. The pavements, littered with torn paper and cigar stumps and the countless odds and ends which mark the trail of a great crowd, were greasy and glistening. The damp cold obscured store windows behind which burned dully the night lights. It spangled the clothing of those who pushed through it and searched their bodies.

One of these wayfarers was Jimmy. Alone he walked slowly toward his rooms, his face almost hidden by upturned coat collar and hat brim. His stocky figure seemed to slouch, his step had none of its wonted spring. When he reached his door-step he mounted it laggardly, and his hand groped with the latch-key. With the door open he remained facing the street. Habitually indifferent to the

weather, now, in a vague way, he felt that this gray morning fitted his state of mind and body.

For, on this morning, Jimmy stood on his door-step a defeated man. He had been repudiated by those whom he had come to think of as his own—stripped of most of his power, a boss no longer—a figure to be pictured as the triumph or pity of his one-time mercenaries might dictate. He was looking at a city which, a few hours before, had declared its will at the polls, and chosen to declare itself free of his command.

It was not bitterness that filled him at this thought; nor yet was he numbed by the blow he had got. Long ago he had taught himself the futility of passive resentment; his was not the temperament which is palsied by misfortune. But a mastering sense of his position besieged his resolution and made his heart sore. It is hard to bring the cup to the lips, and have it snatched away; it is harder still to drink of the wine of success only to come upon the bottom of the measure when its sweetness is beginning to realize the anticipations of a thirst long endured for the sake of this draught, and which nothing else may satisfy.

Many recollections thronged upon Jimmy as he stood on his door-step. He remembered the boast he had made to Kate in long-gone years; he recalled the events which had marked the steps of his march toward that dominant place which, he had said, he

would make his own. Now, these happenings mocked him. They did not seem to have been the rewards of toil and watchful care and skill; rather they were the lures which had drawn him on to ruin. In the glow of his enthusiasm at one time, they had cast exaggerated reflections upon the veil of the future—reflections which had appeared substantial then but which now he saw, were but will-o'-th'-wisps that danced ahead of him, enticing him to the fatal mis-step.

That mis-step he had made when he left the path of straight-dealing with those who shared the way with him. He had miscalculated. He had not waited till he was strong enough to overthrow Walsh and the rest in open fight, and so cleared the road to fame for himself. He had tried to trip his enemies and elude their vengeance. They had repaid him in kind, and out-maneuvered him because they outnumbered him, and because he carried a burden, bound to him by his heart-strings. Yes, if it had not been for Marcus, he reflected, he might have kept his feet, and, even when he stumbled, have recovered himself, and won his way back to firm ground. But—now? The burden was removed from him; but—it was too late. His enemies would press him down, and seek to make an end of him.

Perhaps, the situation did not express itself to Jimmy in these terms, but they interpret his position adequately. When he stepped inside the house

and walked wearily upstairs, he was repeating to himself, "The investigation of th' Water Trust comes next! They'll never stop till they've tried their hands at showing me up." The embers of his resolution flared at this thought. "And, maybe, that's where they'll fall down!" he added silently. Then he threw off his overcoat, and something fell from it to the floor.

He stooped, and picked it up. It was a long, brown envelope, tied with tape. His brows were drawn together in the effort to identify it. Suddenly, he remembered that this was what had slipped into his fingers when he bent over Marcus's body. He turned it over, and saw, written across one end, Kate's name and a date.

Instantly, he recognized the envelope and knew where it had come from originally. But that only furnished him a greater puzzle.

He remembered the day on which Kate had handed it to him. "A paper of mine," she had said. "Won't you put it where it'll be safe?"

He had pocketed the envelope with a "Certainly." Even her low-spoken, "Once upon a time, I used to read it over most every day," did not fix his attention. His mind was very busy at the time with an important errand of his own. Kate's words he had put into one of these mental pigeon-holes in which he stored whatever he might wish to refer to later. There, like the envelope which she gave to

him and which he promptly put into his private box at the Bank, they had lain for years. He had given her a receipt for the envelope, scrawled on a slip of paper in his own handwriting and, afterwards, thought no more on the happening.

But, like the packet now in his hands, Kate's words were distinct to him at this moment. He began to wonder what they had signified. What, too, was in this packet which—which had been in the vault at the Bank when last he saw it, and, yet, a few hours ago, was in Marcus's pocket? How did it leave the Bank? Why was Marcus carrying it with him? Did Kate know?

He turned the envelope over again, and tried to make a guess at what it held. Instinct, rather than any process of reasoning, at last overcame his scruples. With the feeling that what he did was for *her* sake, he untied the envelope, raised the flap, and slid out the enclosure. It was of parchment paper, folded several times. It was legibly inscribed on the back with names and a date and a statement. To Jimmy it revealed everything.

So overwhelming, though so simple was this revelation that, for a minute, he remained staring at the paper which shook in his hand, incredulous, almost uncomprehending. As the full meaning of it dawned on him, a great rush of joy flooded his heart. The blood leaped to his cheeks, his haggard eyes glowed.

He grasped the paper tightly with both hands, devouring it with his gaze.

No other document could have held for him the title to such happiness and relief. For here was the warrant of Kate's immunity from the danger from which he had long sought to shield her by the sacrifice of himself and his hard-earned power! Here was an affidavit to the lying craft with which Marcus Doran had tricked him and wrung from him bribes at will! Here was testimony to the slenderness of the thread which suspended over Marcus's head a weapon that would have made him impotent, had Jimmy known of its existence!

It was Kate's marriage certificate, filled in and endorsed by the "runaway marriage minister," Old Mayers, now long since dead.

The minutes sped swiftly by while Jimmy held that precious paper, and his heart throbbed its thanksgiving. There was no place in his mind for the questions which the paper raised and left unanswered; even the sting of his own defeat was unfelt just then. When he slipped the certificate into its envelope and tied the strings about it and put it away, he was thinking only of Kate. And, again and again, she seemed to lay a soothing hand on his brow as he tossed on his bed and struggled with the tormenting recollections of his overthrow, until exhaustion drew him into the chambers of sleep.

The sun had but burned the mist away when he was dressed and on the street. He knew that the "waiting-room" down-town must already be packed with men. As he faced the situation now, gladdened by something in the breast-pocket of his coat, and with body invigorated by rest, he saw his way more clearly.

First of all, friends and foes alike should see him erect and undismayed. His enemies should have no reason to doubt his determination to keep up the struggle; his friends should be convinced that whatever his course, his heart was strong, his brain as clear and active as ever. Already he had made his plans and shaken from him fruitless questions and regrets. Before dawn he had fought it all out with himself. There was to be no wavering. It was to be work, work, with all of his old-time vigor and skill.

So, with quick step and a face on which was resolution and cheerfulness, he left his home, and turned toward Kate's house. First of all he must see her. Though she could have felt little of real sorrow because of Marcus's death, there might be much which he alone could do for her at this time. He had been the one to tell her of Marcus's death, and give the orders which were needed. Jack had stood by her, his arm around her shoulders, and held her closely to him. Jimmy had left them thus. The lingering

pressure of Kate's hand had been the messenger of her gratitude and trust.

This morning she saw him again; and the few minutes that he remained with her were of the hardest in his experience. Marcus seemed to stand between them in death, as he had never been able to do in life. The indescribable stillness of the house forbade words. Jimmy thought that Kate's grave eyes rested on him with gentle reproach. His aversion to hypocrisy made him uneasy with himself; for his silence seemed to imply that he mourned for Marcus. He could not force himself to speak a sympathy which he did not feel; and to say anything else, he understood would be untimely. So, with his heart crying for voice, he spoke a few, blundering words, pressed Kate's hand, and told her he would come again.

As he closed the street door behind him, the long crape at the bell-pull was blown across his breast. He started back, and loosed himself from its clasp violently. A healthy repugnance to its touch was tinged with a subtler feeling—partly awe, partly a fancy that Marcus laid a hand on him.

But clear sunshine and crisp air soon dissipated his lurking depression, and he plunged into the work before him with a heartiness that surprised the most devoted of his followers.

“ Fhlat on their backs these r'formers 'll be b'fore

they know th' offices they 's runnin' fur!" was Mat Casey's enthusiastic aside to another Ward-man that afternoon. "A board wid buttons an' lacers an' shuspinders 'll be Walsh's job this toime three years!" he added. "An' 't 's meself 'll contribute a little dog t' lade him, whin that toime comes; fur 't 's sorry Oi do fale fur th' bloind!"

Jimmy, overhearing a part of this prophecy, smiled, but made no comment.

He was not smiling, three mornings later, however, when he called Jack into his office. Outwardly he was calm; inwardly he wrestled with an ugly conviction. He told Jack to close the door, and sit down. Then he asked, "Did you ever see that before?"

Jack's look dropped and his cheeks burned, then paled, at sight of the long, brown envelope. He did not reply at once. He was arguing with himself. And Jimmy knew that he was, and did not help him out. But, when he said, "Yes," in a low voice, Jimmy replied, "I'm glad you said that. I was almost certain that you *had* seen it. You took it from my box in th' vault; didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Did you know what it was?"

"No!" he answered quickly. He repeated earnestly; "No, I didn't know what it was."

"Why did you give it to—him?"

"He—my father? He—said he had to have the papers in it, for some—legal business."

“Th’ papers didn’t belong to him.”

“He had the receipt for the package—” Jack halted conscious of the futility of the plea.

“You had no right to give up th’ package, receipt or not, except to th’ depositor,” replied Jimmy. “But let that go for th’ present. Where is th’ receipt? I’ve looked over th’ files, and I can’t find it. Besides, this envelope was taken from my private box, and, I don’t think anyone but you know where I keep th’ duplicate key to it. That’s why I sent for you. Where is th’ receipt?”

Jack’s hands were clenched. He said almost defiantly; “Here it is.”

Jimmy took the slip of paper, gave it a glance and winced. “Why didn’t you file this?” he asked.

“Because—because——” His voice died away in a whisper.

Jimmy could not see his face, and repeated his question. Still he got no reply. Then he realized that the other was afraid of the truth, and his mind busied itself with furnishing a reason for this fear. Did Jack know what was in the envelope? Had he connived at the plot? He drove the thought from him. But, for a while, he could hit upon no clue; and Jack did not assist him. All at once he remembered that Jack had said he *did* not know what was in the envelope. “*Did* not, but perhaps, was told by his father afterward,” his mind suggested.

In a flash, he reproduced the situation as supplied

by his knowledge of Marcus and his plot. Jack had been persuaded into securing the envelope for his father and, then, had been told enough by the latter to throw him into a panic. Horrified by his father's veiled threats, he had not known which way to turn. So he had kept the secret. Now, he was fearful lest it should be wrested from him, and come to his mother's ears.

Broken bank regulations and Jack's weakness were forgotten as Jimmy pictured the young fellow's terror, and realized that it was love for his mother which had swayed him. His heart went out to the figure opposite to him. If he had reflected further it would have been to wonder at himself for harboring those ugly suspicions. Instead, he extended both hands, and spoke right out.

"Jack," he said in a low voice; "Jack, come here!"

Jack got up, and came over. He was astounded by this changed front. But his relief was none the less intense. He saw that something which he did not understand had saved him, and shame smote him as Jimmy's fingers gripped his, and Jimmy spoke from his heart, "You don't need to tell me anything. *I'm* satisfied—more than satisfied. You're your mother's own son. . . . Think of *her* always; you can't better that."

Jack felt his hand released, and stood, for a moment unable to shake off his bewilderment.

Nor did his silence seem strange to Jimmy, who thought he knew what held him speechless. "That's all right, my boy," he went on. "I'll keep th' receipt, and put it back in th' envelope—where it belongs. No one else 'll know about it. I'll let 'em think I made a mistake. You'd—better go now. They'll begin to wonder outside what's going on in here."

Jack went slowly out of the office. He was still in a daze.

But, if he had but known it, nothing that he could have done or said would have deepened the impression of his innocence and nobility as did his unresponsive attitude. For Jimmy understood that there were feelings too sacred to be uncovered. He had hugged one such feeling to his own breast. He knew, too, that there were purposes which lie close to the heart, and, sometimes, never are revealed, though they be the springs of the most momentous actions. Since he first identified his ambitions, he had kept watch and ward over such purposes—most often, to have them declare themselves, when the time was ripe, in the successes of his political career; occasionally, to have them come to naught, and be abandoned. Only once had he allowed such a secret to be stolen from him, and that had been calamitous.

It was to lessen the scope of this calamity and to carry himself through its consequences with such of the honors of war as he might compel that Jimmy bent his energies during the month that followed

his sweeping defeat at the polls. His term as a Water Works Trustee did not expire for a year; he retained a grip on City Councils through the members of that body who had yet a year to serve. These agencies, he was determined should confront and confound his enemies in their next move—the investigation of the Water Trust.

Therefore, after Marcus had been quietly buried, and he had assured himself that Kate was provided for, he was again to be found daily in "Back." To all who came there he was still "Th' Boss."

Some of them, like Casey, were staunchly true to him, and believed that he would regain all of his old power. There were others who feigned a like faith because it suited their immediate plans, or because they were afraid to offend—just yet. Jimmy misunderstood none of these persons; neither did he tax them with infidelity. He handled them fearlessly, but with extreme care. His trustfulness was one of his beautiful qualities. But, sometimes, when one of the sycophants had left him and he was alone, his lips would be pressed upon each other, and he would sit motionless for a time, with wishful eyes fixed upon something that must have been far beyond the grimy walls, ten feet away.

For all of these periods of abstraction, however, he was active and resourceful when others were by; and, when the demand came for an investigation of the Water Works which he still dominated, it was met

with a resistance so stubborn and skillful as would have discouraged any attack less general and resolved than that actuated by insulted public sentiment. As it was, the reformers placarded the city with the demand, "Down with Devlin and the Water Trust!" Three-fourths of the newspapers repeated this in their headlines daily; it was in the mouth of every orator who spoke for reform. To those few who knew Jimmy in his private character and had miserably soft hearts it sounded like the baying of hounds on the trail. They cursed the men who uttered it.

But Jimmy didn't. His smile was a little bitter, his words quiet; his acts defensive. He matched petitions for an investigation of the Trust by City Councils with mass meetings which passed resolutions of confidence in his honesty and called attention to the fact that never had the water supply been so plentiful and pure and the politeness of the Trust's employes so marked as since J. Devlin became a trustee. In truth, it had been Jimmy's endeavor from the first to effect this. It was a bit of advice he was fond of giving those in his confidence, "Throw a bone to save th' meat."

The time came, however, when the resolutions introduced into City Councils could no longer be "tabled" and "referred." Then Jimmy came out in a statement to the public.

"The Water Trustees," he said; "had nothing to be ashamed of. Their work refuted the charges.

However, it was time these charges were silenced. Therefore, they appealed to City Councils to make an investigation of the Water Works and its management."

"And let the investigation be a thorough one," he was quoted as adding—in the name of his fellow trustees. "The Trust challenges its defamers. It has nothing to conceal."

City Councils responded at once. The investigation was entrusted to a committee. All through that Spring this committee continued its investigations. During the Summer it adjourned its labors. In the early part of the following winter the end came suddenly.

One day in November Peter McCall of the Fourth Ward, who was Chairman of the Investigating Committee, walked into Jimmy's office. His face was glowing. He held out several folded sheets of paper. "Th' findin's of th' Committee;" he said laconically, and sat down.

Jimmy spread out the papers, and read them through slowly. Then he thrust out a hand to McCall; and that portly, bewhiskered gentleman took it, and was satisfied. "Carried by one vote!" he explained.

"Craig's?"

"Yes."

"Well,—he was worth all he got. He said that he held his—opinions high—and—he did."

When McCall had gone; Jimmy wrote a dozen words on a sheet of paper, put it into an envelope, addressed it, and called a messenger boy. Twenty minutes later, Kate got the note, and read:

“Councils Committee finds nothing wrong with the Water Trust or—
J. DEVLIN.”

That afternoon all the city heard this news, and, for three days talked about little else. Then, it got another piece of news which astounded it. It took the form of a statement in the newspapers, over Jimmy's signature.

Jimmy had resigned from the Water Trust, and retired from politics.

FEW of Jimmy's friends ever understood clearly his sudden retirement from politics. His statement in the newspapers was brief and unsatisfactory. It supplied only the inexplicable reason that interests "outside of politics" demanded all of his attention. These interests, it was agreed, were largely represented by the Union Bank. But, as he had been President of that institution for many years, the explanation seemed scarcely adequate.

Jimmy himself was non-committal. He said that he had said all that he had to say in his public statement. There the personal inquiry ended. But some of those who knew him little whispered, "Th' Old Man's breaking down, and knows it." A few credited him with the unworthy motive of saving his skin at the expense of others.

They all knew that the big battle with the reform element was not ended; that the vindication of the Water Trust had been a case of "whitewashing" which would not satisfy its opponents. When, two years later, the Legislature, having been appealed to, passed a special act giving the city a new charter by

which the Water Trust was abolished, there were a good many who once had sworn by Jimmy, to say, "I told you so! Jimmy knew when to get out. He wasn't worryin' about th' rest of us."

But there were those who never believed this or other calumnies. They stoutly defended Jimmy, and asserted that he had always dealt fairly by those who dealt fairly by him. Yet, even they had to confess that he furnished them with a puzzle. Retirement under fire had not been his habit; retreat was a note which, as a politician, he had seldom sounded. It was his opinion, "No fight's over till th' enemy's left th' field."

What Jimmy's own ideas were he never told to any one in so many words. Yet, there were things he said and did which might have thrown light on the question, if interpreted by one who knew him very well. Perhaps, Kate came near to guessing the whole truth.

For two days after he had announced his retirement from politics he did not get the chance to see her. Almost every minute of this time was occupied in making his retirement a fact. For several weeks he had been quietly preparing for the move, but, as he kept his intentions a secret until the last moment there remained a great many things to be attended to, a great many men to see, and a great many questions to answer. "I want to leave a clean board," he said. And he did all in his power to effect this.

Then, one evening, he saw far enough ahead to turn aside, and he went to Kate.

He had sent word that he was coming, which was something he had never done before; and she felt that it was to be a sort of state visit. She told him so when he came in.

He laughed. "Is Jack in?" he asked.

She said no; and he seemed to be immensely relieved. "Is it a secret from Jack?" she inquired, watching him closely.

"What?" he flashed back.

"Your—oh, why you left politics?"

"No, of course not—at least not to you. Only, I've been asked so many times why—I've done what I've done, and what I'm goin' to do now, and all that sort of thing, that I'm beginning to want to—hide somewhere."

"So you came here?" said Kate, passing over the inconsequence of his reply.

"Isn't it a pretty good sort of a place to come to?" he returned.

"That depends."

"On what?"

"On yourself—on me—and—on your business."

"If it depends on *me*, I'll show you what I think of it. If it depends on *you*, I know, I won't complain."

"Why, Jimmy! You're actually paying compliments! What has come over you?" she cried.

"Nothing. Do you think I'm too old to pay a compliment?"

"Not too old; but too wise. And now you've forgotten your business. A good deal depends on that."

"How—how much?" He laughed, but seemed quite concerned to know.

"Why, everything. Is this a political visit?"

"*Not much!*" He shook his head earnestly. "*Politics!*" he ejaculated scornfully.

"Oh, *politics!*" she exclaimed, mocking him. Then, suddenly, "Why *did* you leave politics? I want a truthful answer!"

"Don't know myself—exactly," he answered. "I haven't had time to think it over yet."

"The truth!" demanded Kate. "You never could deceive me, remember!"

"Th' truth? Don't you know better than to seek it in a politician?"

"You're a politician no longer."

"But I can't get out of bad habits."

"Jimmy's habits weren't so bad—at least, not all of them."

"Weren't they? I'm glad to hear some one say that."

"But he had one very bad one; and that was trying to play the same tricks on me that he did on his old politicians. Now, you sent word to me that you were coming here this evening. What was that for?"

“For?” he coughed, uncrossed his legs, then crossed them again. “To let you know I was coming,” he finished.

She kept her eyes on his face. “I’m waiting?” she said.

“You don’t have to wait,” he replied. “I’m here.”

“Go on,” she prompted.

“Go on? Why, I’ve just come!” he expostulated. He gave her a piteous glance. But his attempt at raillery was weak, and it broke down right there.

Kate was looking at him steadily; he gave up the effort to divert her. “Hang it all!” he said. “What is it you want to know, anyway?”

“Why it was that you sent word that you were coming here this evening?” she repeated calmly. “You may n’t remember, but you never did that before. Now, why *did* you send word?”

Jimmy sat up very straight, and drew in a long breath. Then he said three words. “To see *you*!”

They were three commonplace words, and he had, doubtless, said them to her several times before. But, now, they exploded from his mouth as if they had been held under high pressure. He seemed greatly relieved at having got rid of them.

Their effect on Kate was more remarkable. In an instant, her face which, a moment before, had been determined and plain to be read, lost its resolution and was all confusing signs. Her eyes suddenly realized that they had been staring at Jimmy’s in a

way that was altogether impolite, and her cheeks blushed for shame of the thing, while her lips remembered their old droop, and, straightway, put a dimple there against further lapses.

Jimmy was aware of these transformations; and, indeed, how could he help it, watching her and knowing that something was going to happen the instant that he transmitted to her the tremendous secret carried by those three words of his. But what he saw, while it did not disappoint him, did not supply him with the power of divination. So, being only a clever man who had spent his life in studying men, he wondered what he should deduce from these signs; he sat silent, and wished that his heart had stayed where it belonged, and not stuck in his throat where it kept him from speaking.

While he struggled with that obstinate organ, Kate, who, in one second, knew just how she looked, and what was the matter with him, and what she ought to say first, looked up, and smiled at him.

"*Now*, I understand," she said. "You wanted to talk over—something—with me—alone. And it's important?"

Her smile had completed his rout, but her words braced him up. Kate understood him so well. "Yes, that's why—I sent th' message I was coming," he managed to say. By heroic efforts he had got his heart where it belonged, and, though it was still jumping around, he was almost sure, now that Kate

had come to his rescue and they were fairly started, that he could keep it there. "You see," he said; "as I've got out of politics, I must decide what I'm going to do."

"And you want me to help you?"

"Y—e—s."

"There's the Bank?" she said. "That ought to take up a good deal of your time."

"Yes," he assented, as if the idea of the Bank was one entirely new to him. "But," he added, with more cheerfulness, "it won't take up *all* of my time."

"And there's your investments. You've often told me that men with money had their hands full looking after it."

"I've got good sized hands!" returned Jimmy. "And, besides,—"

"You've got that Land Company—out in Colorado? You can give more attention to that now."

"I know all those things, I guess," he said abruptly.

"But, I thought you wanted me to suggest what you could do?"

"So I did. But—well, I want something else!"

"Why, you've just left politics, because—because—"

Jimmy nodded. That "because" held a world of meaning. It indicated to him that she understood some of his reasons, at least. And this, not only fitted well with his own mood, but reflected credit on

her acumen. The fact was that he had told her many things and allowed her to guess many more that no one else ever knew; therefore, she was better able to pass fair judgment on his actions. It pleased him to think that she approved of what he had done, and he was sure that she did. "Yes," he responded; "I left—just—*because*. But that doesn't hinder me from wanting something else; does it?"

She made no reply.

"Does it?" he asked. "Does it hinder me from wanting——"

"No, of course not," put in Kate quickly. "Business——"

"This is *not* business," he corrected instantly.

Their eyes met again, and his were not the first to fall. But it was Kate who spoke. "Is—this—something—special?" she asked.

"It is, certainly—something special." He said it as if he was very sure.

For a minute they sat without speaking. Kate's eyes were on her hands which were locked in her lap. Jimmy was watching her; his were very bright. "Don't you know?" he inquired at last.

"I suppose—I should," she answered slowly.

"You *do* know."

Still she did not say she did, and he went on. "Yes, you—you know." Then, putting all his resolution to the test. "Don't you know? Don't you know, Kate?"

And she said in a low voice; "Yes, I guess I know."

Jimmy looked in her face, now raised to his, and was sure she told him the truth. But, for a little while, she said nothing more; and he said nothing because, it seemed to him, that he had said it all.

He wondered of what she was thinking as she sat there, her head turned to one side, resting on a hand. It did not occur to him that she might be weighing his qualities; they had known each other too long and honestly for that. What he did understand was that here was something in which his arguments and his shrewdness could avail him nothing. It was beyond him; he was only a petitioner. He realized that there are nerves which are beyond one's control at times. He longed to do something to aid his cause, and could not.

Yet, with all the strangeness of this, one thing became more plain to him as the seconds sped by, and she was silent and—calm, when, so his instinct told him, she should not be that way. Here was the Kate he had always known—a little sad and mute but not confused, nor yet uncertain. In some way, he understood that this was wrong. His heart, from thumping wildly, grew heavy and sore and, perhaps, rebellious.

Then, Kate turned her face to his once more, and, right away, his resentment, if it was that, left him. Though what he wanted to see was not in her face,

at least, he was sure that there was something there that was very near it and very dear to him. Her eyes were softly shining; maybe, there was a mist in them. Her lips were parted, and told him a great deal before she spoke.

"Dear, old Jimmy," she said. "*How* I wish I could be—the way you want me to be and—the way *I* want to be, too! I tried hard to make myself think I—it was—that way—when I was so quiet just now. I really did. But—I want you to listen to me for a little while. You will, won't you? And you'll know I'm telling you the truth?"

Jimmy could only nod. It was still hard to speak, only now, he had a queer, choky feeling, such as he had never experienced before. It was as if all the tears of forty years had been saved up for this time, and had run down into his throat. Some of those tears must have got into Kate's throat, too.

"Once upon a time," she said; "I—set my heart on something. And I got it, and then—it wasn't at all what I thought. *You* know what I mean?" Jimmy nodded? "Then," she went on; "after a while, I began to wonder, if, after all, I hadn't looked in the wrong place for it—for what I wanted. And, for a while, I thought, I knew where it was, this time, sure enough. There was someone came to me, when I was first disappointed. No,—it wasn't then he first came to me; for he was always coming to me, when I needed him most. At any rate, I was almost

certain that he had what I wanted so much. But he didn't—say he had; he didn't say anything about it. He just was—around,—as he always had been, and did what he could, and that was a great deal. I thought about him,—almost all the time, I guess; thought I couldn't do anything for him. You know who this was?"

Again Jimmy nodded. It was an odd, automatic, little jerk of the head which, somehow, wrenched him. But he was sitting back in his chair, gripping the arms of it. He felt as if he were fixed there, with only his head free to move, and his voice was gone. Now and then, Kate's face and figure, as she leaned toward him, were blurred; and, yet, his face was dry.

"But, by and by," she continued; "I saw that—that I'd been mistaken again. Then, I was glad that I'd never—that he'd never seen my mistake. It would have been *so* easy to let him see it. Once, when he told me about a promise he'd remembered for eighteen years, I nearly did let him see it. But I didn't. Something kept me from it. Afterward, I only hoped that he'd never make the same mistake I had. And, now—now, he's made it."

"No, he hasn't!" said Jimmy, finding his voice all at once. "I haven't made any mistake!" he repeated vehemently. "You *know* I haven't made any mistake."

But she laid a hand gently on his. "Yes, you have," she said, very low. "Oh, Jimmy! I know you

have. Can't you see it? Why, why, it's just the same as it used to be, when you and I sold papers. It's just the same, only we've—grown up." She gave a little sigh, and his fingers closed on hers.

He tried to say it wasn't so; but she went on, "We've been chums so many years that it seems as if we were—something else. But—we aren't, Jimmy. We aren't, Jimmy, dear!"

"I know we are. I know we are," he returned stoutly, fighting against her conviction. "I'm not just your chum, anyway. I won't be it!" he finished fiercely.

But she repeated softly, "Jimmy! Jimmy! don't you see what I mean! I'm right, indeed, I am Jimmy."

Suddenly his resolution failed him. He was seized with a sense of his helplessness, and this helplessness he could not put aside. It struck him down; he could only whisper, "You mean—you—we can't be—anything else?" It seemed to him almost as if another person were saying the words. He understood that he had lost. But, even yet, he strove not to accept the truth. She must tell him.

"No, we can't be—anything else," Kate said softly.

He had released her hand; she held out both of them to him, and touched his.

Jimmy looked at them for a moment almost stupidly. He was groping for aid; and, all at once, he

saw it was there—in Kate's hands. He took them both into his own.

“We're going to be what we've always been,” she told him; and he realized something of what it was to have her for this. “We were chums when we sold papers together,” she added; “we were chums when you stood by me, and helped me through so many hard places, and you—we're always going to be chums?”

She halted, and Jimmy was looking into her calm, trustful eyes with their veil of tears. And her smile, which was a little sad, a little wistful, seemed to say, “Jimmy! you'll do this for me?”

“Yes,” he answered, as he held her hands fast. “Yes, we'll always be—chums.”

“**A**SK Mr. Doran to come in here,” said Jimmy, one morning in February. It was in his private office at the Union Bank, and a conference between himself and the Cashier of the Bank had just come to an end. The financial market was unstable, the stock market in a condition favorable to almost anything but security.

Jack Doran responded to the call. He said “Good morning,” and stood, waiting.

Jimmy slowly wrote some names on a sheet of paper. He had never been a rapid penman, but, to Jack, he now seemed to write more laboriously than ever. One might almost detect a tremor in the plump hand, veined with purple. His shoulders were erect and his graying hair thick, but the cords that were beginning to ridge his neck and the wrinkles about his eyes were not to be mistaken. His voice, however, was clear and steady, as he finished writing, and, while glancing over the paper, said, “You know, of course, that things look a little squally? You saw that Mason and Company are in trouble; and that it’s said T. B. Jenkins is likely to be affected?”

"Yes," answered Jack.

"Well, we want to keep on th' safe side. We've decided to watch th' people I've put down here—pretty closely." Jimmy looked up from the paper. "We don't want to hurt their credit, of course. We'll do all we can for 'em, so long as it ain't taking too big risks. But there we stop. I'll tell th' rest; and I want you to be special careful. Their paper—and all that sort of thing. Anything with their names on it,—look at it hard and think it over before you accept it, if any payment 's to be made. You understand?"

"Yes, I understand," answered Jack. He took the paper. His glance traveled over it. "Peabody and Makin? Are they in trouble? I thought they were of the best."

"They're all right—now—as far as I can find out. But they have—connections. Stock brokers are bound to. For another thing, they're heavily interested in York and Clayton Railroad; and—well, I don't like that over much."

"York and Clayton? Why, that's gilt-edged, everybody says?"

"Who's everybody?"

"Why—the best informed people. And the stock's been steadily going up. It's generally believed, so I've been told, that it 'll be fifty per cent higher inside of six months, anyhow."

"Maybe, maybe. But we're dealing with th' pres-

ent, just now. What may happen six months from to-day ain't—Well, a lot of things might happen by then. Anyway, York and Clayton ain't an asset of this Bank; so we're not interested in it, except to see that too much of our customers' credit doesn't hang on it. Th' stock market's a good place to keep out of, particularly if you're in a Bank.

Jack did not respond. "Don't you think so?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes,—of course, I do."

Jimmy had been studying the other's face. "You're not looking well," he said. "What's th' matter, my boy?"

"Nothing 's the matter with me," returned Jack. He was smiling; but his denial was an affirmation in fact. "At least, nothing much is the matter," he qualified. "I've been sleeping badly lately; that's sort of knocked me out, I guess."

"You don't look right about th' eyes, that's certain. You look worried. I tell you what you do; take a few days off. We don't want you laid up. You——"

"Oh, no! I don't want to leave here. I—well, I've got everything running—smoothly. Another man 'd muss it all up, maybe."

A stronger light flooded Jimmy's face. "Jack you're—all right!" he said. "You talk th' way I like to hear a man talk. It's grit—that's what it is."

Jimmy was aroused. Something mounted in his

veins like wine, and made his eyes sparkle. His heart rejoiced itself with the thought that this was the boy whom he had started in life—Kate's boy, and that he stood true to the mark. "Shake hands!" he cried.

But Jack had dropped the slip of paper with the names on it, and had stooped to pick it up. So the extended hand was not taken, and, instead, patted him on the back. "But you must take those days off, just th' same," Jimmy went on. "When I come home—I've got to go to Chicago, for a day or so, this week—we'll make you take your holiday, then."

"Thank you——"

"Not a bit," broke in Jimmy; and, after a moment, went on; "You see, Jack, you're more to me than th' cashier of this bank. You know that, don't you? Why, ever since you was a little shaver, I've been watching you and planning for you. You're just th' same as if you was my son, in lots of ways. If things go th' way I want, you'll be right on top here, at th' Bank. I ain't going to last—always, though, I guess, I'd knock out a good many that's younger than me yet. But I'm goin' to have a lot of good times seeing how *you* run things."

Jack strove to speak. Jimmy raised a protesting hand. "Hold on there!" he said hastily. "Don't you begin to say 'you're too kind' and all that sort of thing. It won't go down with me. Th' old man's

too young to swallow such talk. I know what you think; I'll take th' words for granted. Besides, I'll have more fun watching you working your way ahead than you'll have doin' th' pushing. *I've* been through it all, and I'm pretty nearly done with it. That's where I've got the call on you."

Jimmy chuckled. The idea of shifting the harness from his shoulders because the pull was heavy amused him. But it warmed his heart to think that soon he was to have the one he had taught to pull strong and fairly for a fellow in harness. He leaned forward, and grasped Jack by the arm. "Stick to your post, and keep to your word! That's what I told you when you first came here," he said gravely. "And you've done both," he added. "That's why you are where you are to-day. And that's why you'll get on farther. And that's why—Well, it's a whole lot of comfort to feel that th' boy I staked on has turned out—dead straight!" His voice was a little shaky, but it was proud and happy, too.

"Dead straight!" echoed Jack in a low, proud tone—so low that Jimmy barely heard him; he was making a twist of the slip of paper, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Yes, dead straight!" repeated Jimmy. Then, as Jack essayed to speak, "Don't you say another word! Why, we're acting like a couple of old women! Get out of here! Get out of here! Don't you see I've got work to do?"

He wheeled around in his chair, and bent over his desk. He dug at the corners of his eyes with vicious knuckle, as Jack walked out.

Jimmy started for Chicago on the evening of that day—Tuesday. His errand was a vital one of personal nature, but he expected to finish his business and be home again by Saturday night of the same week.

On Wednesday evening, however, he read disquieting dispatches from his own city. The financial conditions there were threatening. He became uneasy. To his mind, a local panic was foreshadowed by the failure of two big firms. One of these was Peabody & Makin; the other had wide business ramifications. But, receiving no word from the Bank he decided to wait to finish his business. On Thursday morning came news of the failure of T. B. Jenkins and of the threatened collapse of a firm associated with the Union Bank. Jimmy was on the train which left Chicago one hour later; he just missed a telegram sent him by the Vice-President of the Bank.

* * * * *

The Union Bank was in trouble. It was whispered on the street early in the forenoon of that Thursday. A hundred tongues spread the news broadcast. By noon the report was a circumstantial story. The Bank had been hard hit by the failures of T. B. Jenkins and an allied banking house. To this the gossip of the street added an astonishing bit of news.

As he passed inside a figure thrust itself through the crowd, and hurried after him. It was Jack Doran, and Jimmy had reached the door of the Directors' Room before he was overtaken. But with his hand on the door knob, he halted at the sound of Jack's voice, and turned. "What is it?" he demanded.

Jack unbuttoned his coat and drew a package from his pocket. He held it out. "There are fifty thousand dollars in securities," he said. "They are for the Bank; I could not get them earlier; they kept us waiting at the Trust Company."

"Fifty thousand dollars!" said Jimmy. "Where did they come from?"

"From—Molly. She gave them to me—for the Bank."

"From——" Jimmy began. Then Jack's face told him something which made him pause. A moment he stood without speaking, the stern lines fading from about his mouth, his eyes lighting. If he did not comprehend all, he understood enough to make him put a hand on Jack's shoulder and give it a great grip. "Jack," he said, "She's a——good girl. But keep the securities, they're not needed." He dropped his hand, and passed into the Directors' Room.

And there he came upon a dozen men with anxious faces grouped about a table. It was a leaden day, but it seemed to them as if he brought sunshine with

them. A murmur of relief came from them, and they were all upon their feet.

Jimmy removed his hat. "Good morning, gentlemen," he said. "It appears we have a good many callers to-day. You're sorry, I take it from your looks; but, in one way, I am not."

They regarded him with amazement, and he smiled back, as he often had done when things seemed all wrong to others and they pulled long faces. "Yes," he went on; "I'm glad; for here's our chance to show we meant what we said when we took hold of this Bank."

He laid on the table a long, black leather bag, and opened it. Then he looked up. "There," he said; "is \$200,000 in securities. They're all right; they'll see us through, I guess. I would like a receipt, please."

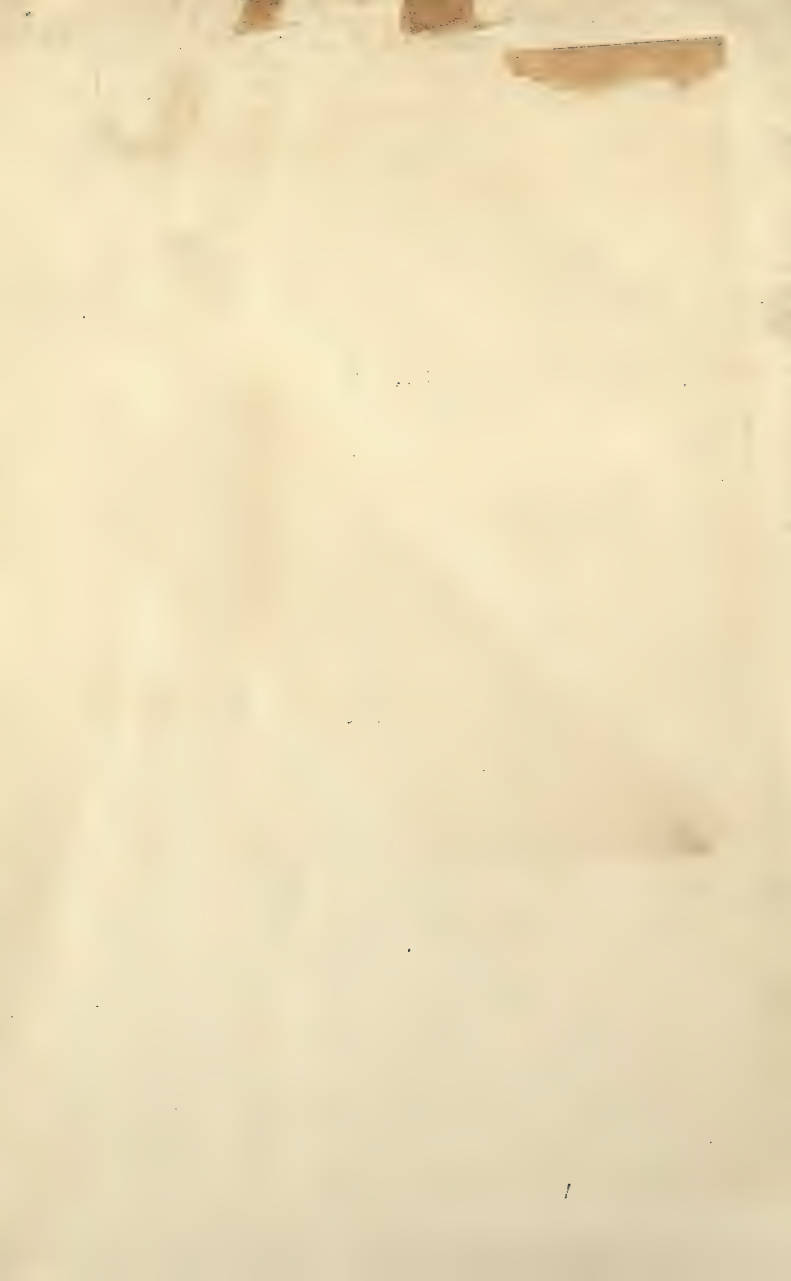
There was a moment of astonished silence, then a long drawn breath. One of the Directors found voice to ask, "These securities? Whose are they?"

"That doesn't matter," answered Jimmy. "But, as a matter of fact, they *were* mine. Now—"

"Your own? But you're not responsible—"

Jimmy interrupted instantly, "I'm President of this Bank, I believe. And I said nobody was going to lose any money here, didn't I? Yes? Well, then—I meant it. It was my word."





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